# CENTRAL PROVINCES
# DISTRICT GAZETTEERS

## BALAGHAT DISTRICT



**VOLUME A**

**DESCRIPTIVE**

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*Deputy Commissioner, Bālaghāt.*

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# BALAGHAT
# DISTRICT GAZETTEER.

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Photo Litho.,

Roorkee College.

BAMBOO AVENUE AND MOTI LAKE BALAGHAT TOWN

# PREFATORY NOTE.

My chief sources of information have been Sir Richard Jenkins' Report on the Territories of the Rājā of Nāgpur; (1827); the old Settlement Reports of the Seonī and Bhandāra Districts by Captain Thomson and Mr. Lawrence (1867); Mr. Mayne's Report on the Bālāghāt Tahsīl (1896); Mr. Scott's Bālāghāt District Settlement Report (1901); Mr. Russell's Census Report and Tables (1902); and monographs on the different castes received from the Superintendent, Ethnographic Survey, especially those on Gonds by Mr. R. S. Thākur, on Baigās by Mr. Lampard and a note by my reader, Muhammad Yusuf, on Ponwārs. The articles on the Fauna of the District and on the Government forests are based on information supplied by Mr. A P. Percival, late Forest Divisional Officer, Bālāghāt: and that on grasses was written by Mr. Faiz Baksh, Extra Assistant Conservator of Forests. The section on the District geology was written by Mr. L. Fermor, Assistant Superintendent, Geological Survey, and the article on Minerals was based on the same officer's paper on the Manganese Deposits of the Central Provinces, and on information supplied me by Mr. W. H. Clark of the Central Provinces Syndicate A portion of the chapter on the social observances of the people was taken from notes by R. B. Anantlāl, Extra Assistant Commissioner, and the account of the very interesting coins found in this District was by Pandit Hirānanda of the Archæological Survey. I am also much indebted for general assistance to Mr. R. V. Russell, I.C.S., Superintendent, Ethnographic Survey, and to his assistant, Mr. Hīrālāl, Extra Assistant Commissioner. For several extracts and pieces of information I have to thank Colonel Bloomfield, whose name is still a household word in Bālāghāt, and who retains in his retirement a keen interest in the District for which he did so much.

BALAGHAT:<br>
*The 18th November* 1906.

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*List showing names of Deputy Commissioners who have held charge of the Bālāghāt District since its constitution, with the dates of their periods of office.*

| Name of Deputy Commissioner. | Period. | |
|---|---|---|
| | From | To |
| J. L. Loch ... ... | February 1867 | August 1868 |
| Lieutenant A. Bloomfield . . | August 1868 | October 1869 |
| | February 1870 | March 1872 |
| | 19-8-1880 | 2-12-1883 |
| | 13-1-1884 | 15-2-1885 |
| A. M. Russell ... ... | Nov. 1869 | January 1870 |
| H. J. MacGeorge ... | April 1872 | April 1873 |
| J. W Tawney ... ... | May 1873 | June 1873 |
| D. O Meiklejohn ... | July 1873 | 17-7-1873 |
| J F. Muir ... ... | 18-7-1873 | Nov 1873 |
| C. A. Newmarch ... | Dec. 1873 | February 1875 |
| | April 1877 | March 1878 |
| F. Venning ... ... | March 1875 | Dec. 1875 |
| Lieutenant-Colonel J. Ashburner . . ... | Nov 1875 | Dec 1875 |
| J. F. Fisher ... ... | January 1876 | January 1877 |
| Captain M. M Bowie ... | February 1877 | March 1877 |
| Colonel H. M. Repton ... | 26-3-1878 | 19-3-1879 |
| Colonel C. H Plowden ... | 20-3-1879 | 19-8-1880 |
| W Nethersole ... | 3-12-1883 | 12-1-1884 |
| W. A. Needham ... | 16-2-1885 | 22-12-1885 |
| | Dec. 1886 | 27-5-1888 |
| Colonel R H. Thomas . . | 23-12-1885 | Nov 1886 |
| R. H. Craddock ... | 28-5-1888 | 1-12-1888 |
| L. Gordon ... . | 1-12-1888 | 19-2-1889 |
| T Drysdale ... . | 20-2-1889 | 9-12-1889 |
| | 6-1-1890 | 22-8-1890 |
| A. L. Saunders... ... | 9-12-1889 | 5-1-1890 |
| | 23-12-1891 | 17-3-1892 |
| | 8-12-1893 | 6-2-1894 |
| H. V. Drake Brockman ... | 23-8-1890 | 17-3-1892 |
| H A. Crump . ... | 17-3-1892 | 30-5-1892 |
| S. M. Chitnavis... ... | 31-5-1892 | 31-8-1892 |
| | 1-4-1893 | 7-12-1893 |
| | 7-2-1894 | 26-9-1896 |
| | 2-1-1[illegible] | 4-4-1897 |
| H. M. Laurie ... ... | 1-9-1892 | 18-10-1892 |

*List showing names of Deputy Commissioners who have held charge of the Bālāghāt District since its constitution, with the dates of their periods of office*—(concluded).

| Name of Deputy Commissioner. | Period. | |
|---|---|---|
| | From | To |
| B. Robertson | 19-10-1892 | 15-3-1893 |
| R. A. B Chapman | 16-3-1893 | 31-3-1893 |
| H. F. Hallifax | 27-9-1896 | 1-1-1897 |
| | 2-1-1901 | 2-4-1901 |
| H. F Mayes | 5-4-1897 | 11-7-1898 |
| R. V. Russell | 12-7-1898 | 15-11-1898 |
| L. A G. Clarke | 16-11-1898 | 27-6-1899 |
| | 29-9-1899 | 10-10-1899 |
| J T. Marten | 28-6-1899 | 28-9-1899 |
| | 20-8-1900 | 1-1-1901 |
| | 3-4-1901 | 15-10-1901 |
| A M Brigstocke | 11-10-1899 | 19-8-1900 |
| C. A Clarke | 4-4-1902 | 3-7-1902 |
| L. T. Sheorey | 16-10-1901 | 2-12-1901 |
| F. C Turner | 3-12-1901 | 3-4-1902 |
| | 4-7-1902 | 7-6-1903 |
| | 23-7-1903 | 11-11-1903 |
| Jageshwar Rao | 8-6-1903 | 22-7-1903 |
| C E. Low | 12-11-1903 | 19-7-1905 |
| | 5-12-1905 | (*Present incumbent*). |
| G. A. Khan | 20-7-1905 | 4-12-1905 |

# BALAGHAT DISTRICT.

## CHAPTER I.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

### BOUNDARIES AND PHYSICAL FEATURES.

Boundaries and extent of District.

1. The Bālāghāt District lies between latitude 21° 19′ and 22° 24′ North and longitude 79° 39′ and 81° 3′ East. Its area is 3,132 square miles, exclusive of an area of four square miles recently added to it by the settlement of a boundary dispute with the Kawardha State. It is thus the smallest save three out of the 18 Central Provinces Districts. It is situated in the Nāgpur Civil Division, and was constituted during the years 1867-1873 by the amalgamation of parts of the Bhandāra and Seoni Districts. Its name signifies 'above the ghāts', and is due to the fact that the original purpose of Government in constituting the District was to effect the colonisation of the tract above the ghāts. The headquarters are at Bālāghāt town, which was originally called Būrha; but popular usage gradually assimilated its name to that of the District; and the change was formally recognised by Government in 1895. It is bounded on the north by Mandla, on the west by Seonī, and on the south and south-west by the Bhandāra District. On the east it is bounded by the Kawardhā Feudatory State, and by the western zamīndāris of the Drug District. The shape of the District may, with some stretch of imagination, be compared to that of a flying bird, with Katangi and Raigarh for its wings, its head the north of Mau, and its tail the hills of the Bhāora zamīndāri. Its greatest breadth from north-east to west-south-west is about 94 miles, and its greatest length from north to south 77 miles.

General appearance.

2. The most characteristic view of the District is presented as one approaches it by railway from the south. The line traverses a wide and fertile plain, richly cultivated and watered by wide rivers. To the east a line of rugged and frowning cliffs suggests, (and the suggestion is not belied by closer acquaintance) a forest upland country of romantic scenery and cool and pleasant climate; as one travels northwards, another line of hills is seen approaching from the west, closing down ever nearer and nearer on the Waingangā river. This river the line follows through the impressive rocks of the Mau valley till it reaches the point where the Waingangā cuts its way out of the Sātpurā plateau. Here it gradually ascends to the Mandlā highlands by the Pondīghāt. There is thus a clear division between the plain and the hilly portion of the District, for which latter the title of Bālāghāt or 'Above the ghāts' was originally intended.

The Katangī tract.

3. The plain is traversed by the Waingangā or Ganga river, which divides it into two unequal portions. The western, consisting of the Karolā and Katangī parganas, is a wide plain into which a large triangular patch of forest-clad hill, a spur of the south Sātpurās, juts forth. The extreme west of this, starting from the trijunction of the Bhandārā, Seonī and Bālāghāt Districts, is a piece of forest-clad and undulating country lying just at the foot of the ghāts, a continuation of the submontane fringe that throughout the District characterises the junction of the plain and hills. Its surface is not sufficiently level to allow of much good rice land, and its jungle contains few trees of value. But its proximity to the plain renders it specially valuable for grazing: and its numerous *palās* trees yield famous crops of lac. The two hamlets that together make up the market town of Katangī lie just outside this tract: and are situated in the midst of the Katangī tract proper, the chief characteristics of which are the predominance of a somewhat inferior type of black soil, which, however, is capable both of

double and spring crops and answers readily to the stimulus of irrigation. The surface is level, and the fields are largely embanked; though there is not, as a rule, any great scope for the construction of irrigation works in the tract itself, it offers a tempting field for irrigation from storage works in the submontane area The villages here are, as a rule, large and populous, though showing sad traces, in the form of crumbling walls and gardens overgrown with weeds and jungle, of the past disastrous ten years. They contain numerous small colonies of weavers, who carry their cloth about from bazar to bazar, and are financed by the dealers in thread who reside in Katangī or Wārāseonī Most villages contain one or more good houses of brick, a relic of the prosperous times of the sixties and seventies and even later, when fine crops of wheat and rice found a ready sale from what was at the time the most accessible portion of the District. Before that, tradition speaks of an era of violence and robbery from the time of the Pindāris down to the constant dacoities of the sixties, for which the Golar zamindārs of Chakaheti and their allies, the local graziers, got the credit.

The Karolā tract.

4. East of this tract lies South Karolā, characterised by wide and level plains of *sihār*, a light yellow soil especially fitted for the growth of rice, through which winds the wide and sandy Chunnai, fringed by fields of sugarcane among which the creak of the wooden cane mill is scarcely silent night or day in the cold weather. There are several fine tanks in this tract, notably the new Government tank at Dorlī. In the south-east corner are a few hills, covered with a scanty growth of scrub jungle, which furnish a catchment area to numerous tanks, small and large, and in the immediate neighbourhood some of the finest rice in India is produced. Northward, again, of this yellow soil tract lies the North Karola plain, consisting mainly of good black soil, and stretching from the Sālebharri hills on the north, and the Sonewāni range on the west, to the Ganga on the east This

tract also has suffered severely in the last ten seasons, and like all black soil country takes a much longer time to recover than light soil areas. To the south of it lies the town of Wārāseoni, a considerable trading centre in its way; in its centre is Lālbarrā, another aggregation of hamlets with a big bazar, like Katangī. The Sarāthi nuliah, issuing from the hills at Kairmarā Tikāri and running into the Waingangā after passing Lālbarrā, is the only stream of any note in this area. It is wide and sandy, and is used in places for irrigation, when, in September, its stream can be induced to rise above the level of the neighbouring fields.*

The Sonewāni hills.

5. The hilly areas on this side of the Gangā consist of the Sonewāni forest tract, and of the small Sālebharri jungle. The former is a large triangular patch of forest, from which issue several moderate-sized streams, such as the Chandia nullah on the west, the Sarāthi on the north and the Dhokria between the two. These streams all make their way into the plain along sandy beds with a gentle slope, unlike the steep valleys and waterfalls of the eastern hills. Ascending one or other of these valleys, one comes at last to a plateau, on which are situated a few jungly villages, really a continuation of the Seonī plain. There are one or two fine hills and deep gorges in this range, but no scenery to be compared with that of the hills on the other side of the valley, though there is a grand view from the hill known as Chindīgarh across the plain into the Bhandāra District. This tract is penetrated by two made roads, leading from Bālāghāt and Katangī to Seonī and known respectively as the Kanjai and Kormī ghāts. There is also a passable forest road from Kairmarā Tikāri up the Sarāthi valley to Sonewāni: and another to the same village from Ramramā. The forest growth of this tract is on the whole poor, and is of the usual mixed type. There are a good many bamboos, and for these and also for timber there is a very effective demand from agriculturists, though the tract is out of the way of traders. The small Sālebharri

forest, covering a picturesque and precipitous hill, is the northern boundary of this part of the District, and marks the southernmost of the rocky barriers through which the Waingangā has to force its way before it can issue on the open plain.

The Mau tract.

6. The northernmost tract on the left bank of the Gangā is known as the Mau pargana, and is owned by the widow of a Marāthā Kunbī landlord. Mau itself, from which the locality takes its name, is almost uninhabited but boasts of a good bazar. The tract consists of a valley, varying between ten and four miles in width, and lying between the steep rocky cliffs of the hills that fringe the valley of the Waingangā and the river itself. In several places these hills project far into the plain, and the beauty of the scenery is enhanced by numerous patches of jungle and scattered trees, and by solitary rocks standing up from the plain, often of startling abruptness and quaint form, like the domed hill of Narsinghā near Lamta The Sāwarjhori, the Mahkāri and the Nahāra rivers issue from the hills by picturesque gorges, and fall into the Waingangā. The extreme north of the tract, where the ascent of the central plateau begins, is exceedingly hilly and rugged, while the extreme south is mainly covered by the Chacherī Government forest, which was intended originally as a teak reserve. It contains also some exceedingly fine *kattang* bamboos, and a very large number of wild animals, which have completely devastated the country on both sides of the river. The railway traverses this area from end to end. The most important village in it is Lāmta. where the Baihar road joins the railway.

The Dhansuā and Hattā tracts.

7. Following the Gangā valley further south, the Dhansuā pargana is reached This is at first poor and jungly, but, soon after crossing the picturesque pass between the bold hill of Magardarā and the main range. an open black soil country, comprising the richest villages in the

District, is reached. There is no change in this type of country right up to the Bāgh Nadī, which, at a spot some 15 miles from Bālāghāt, takes the place of the Waingangā as the western boundary of the District. This black-soil rice country is exceedingly picturesque all through the cold weather; the fields are full of amber-coloured rice or, a little later, of the blue of the linseed, while the field banks, covered with golden flowered tūr or the white and purple of climbing beans, remind the English visitor of the flower bedecked hedges of his own country.

Nearer the hills is a far poorer and more undulating tract, cut up by water-courses, of which the jungle, as a rule, is inferior. Its most characteristic tree is the *palās*, which only condescends to be beautiful once a year, when it signalises the setting in of the hot weather with a glorious display of scarlet Such country as this fringes the whole length of the hills throughout the District, relieved only where the valleys of the Son and Deo issue from the Sātpurās, by graceful clumps of *kattang* bamboos, standing in open and parklike valleys.

Kirnāpur, Lānji and Bhādra.

8. The prevailing soil of the country south of the Hattā zamīndāri, is, with the exception of a few villages near Kirnāpur, a brownish black, known as second class *morand*. This answers well for irrigation and yet produces a second crop. The whole tract is, however, particularly uninteresting in appearance; even the banks of the Son and the Deo, where they pass through it, carry but little jungle; and it is with relief that the traveller turns, past the low forest-clad hills and wide-spreading tanks that surround the little town of Lānji, to the lower valley of the Son; here to the north-west, the Chauria cliffs, with an almost precipitous fall of nearly 1,300 feet, and a tangled mass of hill and valley on the east, enclose a sandy plain, studded with clumps of *kattang* bamboos, lying in the midst of forests of *bījāsal*, teak and other valuable timber trees.

The Sāletekrī zamīndāri

9. If one wishes to reach the Baihar plateau by way of the Son valley, a most rugged and stony track must be traversed through many miles of forest, where yearly fires prevent any of the more valuable trees from coming to maturity and water is scarce. The road travels along the hills to the east of the valley: hills and valley alike being perhaps the most lonely, inhospitable and tiger-haunted in the District. Only an occasionally *bewar* cutting, with two or three Baigā huts, whose inhabitants dive into the jungle at the sight of a visitor, breaks the monotony of rolling hill and open bamboo forest. At the top of the Ghāt, an entirely different country is seen. The Banjar river, which rises in the Thākurtolā zamīndāri, a few miles away, flows along the eastern boundary of the tract, and its wide black soil valley, interrupted by low forest-clad ridges, between which narrow but perennial streams make their way down to the Banjar from the slightly raised eastern edge of the valley, invites more efficient settlers than the Banjārā and the Ahir, whose herds of cattle pasture freely over it at present. The population here is purely Chhattīsgarhī in clothes, appearance and language, and one cannot go wrong in addressing the headman of a village as 'Gaontia' From the western edge of this valley a wide view can be obtained over the wild country of the upper Son valley, the haunt of bison and tiger, where in the hot weather a scattered patch or two of *sāl* varies with its light green leaves the hopeless monotony of the ill-treated and scanty forest.

The plateaus of eastern Baihar.

10 Following the Banjar further down its course, Bhīmlat is reached, the scene of an attempt on the part of Government, continued for many years, to effect the colonisation on ryotwāri principles of a fertile but fever-stricken area Here the plain, though wide and open, is much cut up by jungle-clad ridges, and is itself so steeply sloping as to render tank construction and rice cultivation

alike difficult: yet prosperous villages, with large stretches of rice fields lying beneath substantial tanks, are not wanting, and the tract shows manifest signs of a yearly increasing cultivation. The course of the Banjar itself, which lies between rocky banks and ridges, usually covered with groves of *sāl* trees, is picturesque: indeed from Muki just below the Bhaisānghāt to the spot where it leaves the District, it traverses an almost continuous *sāl* forest.

The main tributaries of the Banjar are the Jamunia and the Taunaur The former rises in the Kawardhā State, and runs just below the Bhaisānghāt through a wide and fertile stretch of black soil, (the detritus no doubt of a trap area continued southward from the existing trap outliers of Toplā) till it joins the Banjar, close to Bhīmlāt. The Taunaur rises in the south of the plateau, and passes the village of Baihar to join the Banjar from the south; its valley forms the south part of the central Baihar plateau, which, though not quite so fertile as Bhīmlāt, is yet capable of much improvement, and will some day no doubt carry a large agricultural population. The high tableland of Tīpāgarh (2,761 feet) divides the valley of the Banjar, a confluent of the Nerbudda, from that of the Nahāra and Uskāl, which run into the Wainganga, and thus forms part of the central watershed of India It affords three principal passes, the Telanghāt, which the Baihar-Bālāghāt road follows; the Dokrighāt, admitting of a country track between Baihar and Phandki Mohgaon, and a third through which the Baihar-Lāmta road makes its way. Colonel Bloomfield constructed a bungalow as a summer residence on this hill, but forest fires and the neglect of years have obliterated all trace of it. The plateaus to the south and east of this comprise, first of all, the isolated cluster of villages round Sonewāni on the upper valley of the Uskāl, imbedded deeply in the jungle; next the tract which begins at Sonpuri in the upper portion of the Bhānpur zamīndāri, and follows the Nahāra valley past Rūpjhar, where the river crosses the Baihar-Bālāghāt

road: continued in a narrow stretch of cultivated country between Tīpāgarh and the broken country of the Dhansuā jungles, it joins the wide plain of Paraswāra, the westernmost and most open part of the Baihar tahsīl.

The Paraswāra and Raigarh plateaus.

11. The drainage of this plain is partly into the Banjar by the Kanhār nullah and partly into the Nahāra; and it is divided from the Banjar and Taunaur valley by a long range of hills running northwards from Tīpāgarh. It is almost fully settled, though the lack of communications, a want only recently supplied, has prevented much accumulation of resources. North of the Banjar Valley is the Bhaisānghāt, a line of hills running south-south-east from the point where the Banjar leaves the District, right through the Baihar tahsīl and the upper plateau of the Kawardhā State, to where the Maikal range descends into the Chhattīsgarh plain; above this range lies the eastern portion of the Mandla District, and a part of this, under the name of the Raigarh plateau, has been allotted to the Bālāghāt District, of which it forms the northernmost tract. The inhabitants talk the variety of Eastern Hindī that is spoken over the east of Mandlā. The surface is very undulating, and the soil is poor, consisting mainly of sand and quartz pebbles or very poor brown soil. In the few spots where there are considerable level stretches however, there is fine black soil, which grows excellent wheat and gram and is capable, when embanked, of growing rice. The only really large stretch of this soil, lying between the Toplā and Koilikhāpa forest reserves has, however, been recently afforested, and it is improbable that Raigarh will ever carry any considerable body of agriculturists. The piercing frosts and deadly fever of this plateau, together with the lack of facilities for rice cultivation, have deterred the Powār and Lodhī of the southern plains from settling there, and its inhabitants are mostly Gonds and Pankas. In appearance it is a wide, grass-covered, rolling savannah with, here and there, *sāl* trees, sometimes only a few

together in the middle of the bare and open plain, sometimes in extensive groves. On the east lie the green *sāl* forests of Toplā with one or two high and precipitous hills, from 2,700 to 2,900 feet in height. To the west, a long steep ridge separates it from the Mandlā District, while to the north are a number of isolated hills of various heights and shapes, among which lie the few mālguzāri villages that fringe the Mandlā-Bilāspur road, the northern boundary of the tract.

The Halon, rising in the Kawardhā State, and traversing the Toplā forests, is joined in the Raigarh plain by the Kashmīri and Gordhauni nullahs, and these three drain the entire plateau into the Nerbudda. They, and the tiny streams that feed them, however small, never dry in any ordinary summer, and the soil along their banks is thickly carpeted with green grass; it is no wonder therefore that, even in the time of Sir Richard Jenkins, this tract formed the summer grazing ground for the cattle of the Nāgpur plain.

The forest tracts of the District.

12. The only part of the District remaining to be described is the forest area, consisting of the Sonewāni block to the west, the large area of forest extending all along the hills below the Baihar plateau, and comprising the Dhansuā and Paraswāra forest ranges and the upland tracts of the Bhānpur, Kīnhi and Sāletekrī zamīndāris, the hilly portion of the Bhādra zamīndāri, and the *sāl* forests of Raigarh. The prevailing type of forest is that found along the ghāts. Here the surface is rarely level, but consists mainly of steep hills, covered with bamboos and inferior timber, with a few better trees such as *bījā*, *sāj* and *dhaurā*. The valleys are usually full of thick grass, and abound in narrow rocky glens, running between moist, fernclad rocks, covered with moss and shaded by overhanging trees. Nowhere in the District is the bare open teak and *salai* forest of the trap country to be found: the sportsman notices the difference at once, the

dense jungle rendering it far more difficult to get a steady shot at an animal and also facilitating the escape of driven game through the beaters. What this jungle can look like at its best may be seen in a few places on the Dhansuā range; though valuable species like teak and *sāl* are not to be found, there are fine trees of *bījāsāl*, and, in the Dhirimangli forest, of *dhaurā* The worst examples of this forest are to be found in the upper zamīndāris. This latter tract, though it possesses many interesting features, has, especially during the last twenty or thirty years, been ruined from a forest point of view, partly by indiscriminate *bewar* cultivation, but mainly by the local iron-workers. The few dozen furnaces that in recent times have been worked in these jungles, may possibly have produced a thousand or two thousand rupees worth of iron per year at their best, but have done so much damage to the jungle, that it can only be estimated in lakhs of rupees In the early eighties it was suggested that it might be desirable to acquire the upper Bhānpur forests as Government jungle, on account of the valuable timber that they contained. At the present moment within the wide area over which the iron-workers have extended their operations, there is hardly a tree worth cutting, and the whole tract is covered with bamboo and scrub jungle. One or other of the above types of forest predominates everywhere in the District, save in the *sāl* forest of the Banjar valley and Raigarh.

*Sāl* forests.

13 The characteristic features of the *sāl* jungle are everywhere similar. This tree being largely affected by the subsoil water level and by frost follows the valley contours. The valley bottoms are usually wide open grass savannahs wherein the young *sāl* seedlings are yearly killed off by frost. The *sāl* occupies the next belt, covering the hills entirely when they are low . when high, as is the case with the *dādars* or plateaus in Raigarh, and the Bhaisānghāt, the tops are a dense tangle of *Bauhinia*, and similar creepers, with small trees such as *sāj* and other minor species, and the lowest part of the slope is

covered with *sāl.* The tree is evergreen, but it renews its leaves in the early hot weather, at which time a valley in Raigarh with its tiny perennial stream flowing down the centre, through a glade carpeted with fresh turf that stretches up to where the green *sāl* leaves spread themselves over a colonnade of straight black stems, is a grateful sight to eyes dazzled with the glare of the plains.

Rivers

14. The drainage of about two-thirds of the District is into the Waingangā, and that of the remainder into the Nerbudda. The former river reaches the District just north-west of Pātādeh, a village in the Mau pargana, and after forming for some distance its western boundary, enters the District near the Gurerā rock. Up to this point its course has been mostly rocky and uneven, but it has now finally left the ghāt region, and thenceforward its way is through the open plain, past the town of Bālāghāt to Borindā, where it leaves the District. Its length within the District is 61 miles and its average breadth 800 feet.

The main tributaries of this river on the right bank are the Sarāthi and the Chunnai. Both of these rise in the Seonī plateau, and make their way down through the ghāts by deep gorges: they join the Gangā after a winding sandy course through the Karolā and Katangī parganas. The length in the District of the Sarāthi nullah is 24 miles, and of the Chandia or Chunnai nullah 35 miles. On the left bank of the Gangā is the Sāwarjhori, a nullah rising in the hills between the Ahmadpur and Bhondwā ghāts. As its course to the Gangā is fairly direct, it is a short stream.

The Mahkāri, rising in the Baihar plateau, which it leaves by the Bhondwā ghāt, runs into the Gangā near Chacheri. Its length is 18 miles

The Nahāra and Uskāl, which drain the Dhansuā jungle and the open country south-west of Tīpāgarh, meet in the Government forest and run into the Gangā near Chacherī.

The length of the Uskāl is 28 miles, and that of the Nahāra 35 miles. The Ghisarī rises near Laugur, and, leaving the hills by a fine waterfall, runs through the Hattā zamīndāri into the Bāgh at Rajegaon: its course is 22 miles.

The Deo rises in the uplands of Chauria where its course is at first northwards through forest-clad and gently sloping valleys Thence it flows to the west over a series of fine waterfalls, till it meets the Kis river. The united stream then passes through a very deep and picturesque gorge into the plain, joining the Bagh close to its junction with the Ghisarī, after a course of 45 miles It may be possible to provide water power from this river, but there is probably too much cross drainage below the point where it leaves the hills for irrigation ever to be a success. The Bāgh forms the western boundary of the District from the Bhādra hills to the Gangā, which it joins at Borindā, a distance of 47 miles. The greater and lesser Bāgh meet at Kulpā The stream is about 600 feet wide where the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway crosses it close to its mouth.

The Son rises in the upper Bhānpur zamīndāri, which it leaves by a remarkable cleft in the hills near Bothaī. Here the river forces its way through a ridge some 300 feet high by a narrow and precipitous defile, that affords a possible site for water storage. Hence it flows southward, and after joining the Tānda, which separates the lower Sāletekrī zamindāri from Thakurtola, runs through the forest-clad but gradually widening valley past Bijāgaon to Lānji. Hence it turns westward to join the Bāgh at Mundesarā.

The Nerbudda and its tributaries

15. The Nerbudda watershed is represented by the Halon and by the Banjar and its tributaries. The Banjar rises in the Thākurtolā zamindāri, and after running north through the upper Sāletekrī zamīndāri and north-west through Bhīmlāt, leaves the District near Sarekhā after a course of 72 miles. Its tributaries are the Jamunia, which rises in the Kawardhā State and runs just below the Bhaisānghāt, joining

the Banjar from the north, and the Taunaur, which rises in the upper Bhānpur zamīndāri, and after leaving the eastern slopes of Tipāgarh, joins the Banjar at Karelī. The length of the Jamunia within the District is 16, and of the Taunaur 21 miles. The Kanhār river drains the Paraswāra plateau and joins the Banjar in the Mandlā District. Its length in the District is 17 miles.

The Halon river rises in the upper plateau of the Kawardhā State. It runs in a long forest-fringed valley through the Toplā *sāl* jungles towards the northern corner of the District at Pandutalā, where it enters Mandlā. Its course through the District is 32 miles in length.

## GEOLOGY.

General.

16. Topographically the Bālāghāt District consists of two distinct areas. The western and south-western portions are occupied by a fairly level plain with an average elevation of about 1,000 feet above sea-level; throughout this area, the rocks to a large extent are obscured by soil and the alluvium of the Waingangā and its tributaries, except in the small hills and hillocks which project above the general level of the plain and in river-beds where the streams frequently lay bare the under-lying rock. The northern and eastern portions of the District, on the other hand, are occupied by the western part of the elevated plateau which extends to the east into the Drug District and which rises so abruptly from the plains of Bālāghāt and Drug. The general elevation of this plateau is about 2,000 feet, from it many hill-ranges and isolated peaks spring up to heights which often reach an elevation of 2,400 to 2,600 feet and sometimes more, as in Tipāgarh Hill, 2,761 feet high In some parts of this plateau the rocks are more or less obscured by soil, and the alluvium of the streams which drain from it, but in all the higher and more hilly parts rock exposures are frequent.

The geological formations observed in this District are the following:—

1. Recent.
2. Laterite.
3. Deccan Trap.
4. Lametā.
5. Chilpīs, felsites and basic intrusives.
6. Granite.
7. Gneisses and crystalline schists.

1. *Recent.*—In addition to the soil and alluvium mentioned above, a common superficial deposit is *muram*, a loose gravel formed by the disintegration of quartzite and other rocks, the fragments being coated with red oxide of iron deposited from percolating surface waters.

2. *Laterite.*—This *muram* is sometimes bound together by a ferruginous cement, thus forming a kind of detrital laterite, the low-level laterite of Indian Geology. Patches of this rock have been found about Budbudā in the plain tracts and Lilameta in the hill tracts. Much more abundant than this rock is the high-level laterite, which, however, is found in this District only on the plateau tracts. This laterite is frequently pisolitic in structure, and when very ferruginous is tinted in various shades of red and purple; but it is often pale buff, cream, grey or pink, and is then usually very aluminous and is known as 'Bauxite'. Bauxite is the principal and almost the only source of metallic aluminium, and has been found in large quantities in this District, especially near Ukua, Sammāpur, Sonpurī and Laugur. Further search will no doubt show the aluminous nature of much of the laterite in other parts of the plateau.

3. *The Deccan Trap.*—Except for a few outliers west and south-west of Baihar (one of these being Tīpāgarh Hill, on which the trap is capped by laterite) this formation is confined to the extreme north-eastern portions of the District, *i.e.*, to the area lying north-east of the Banjar river. It is

composed of the usual horizontal basaltic lava-flows giving rise to flat-topped hills.

4. The *Lametās*, composed of gritty limestones, immediately underlie the Deccan trap as a horizontal layer of variable thickness, never more than 50 feet, and appear as a thin fringe of rocks cropping out round the base of the trap scarps. As would naturally be expected, they are confined to the same area as the trap.

5. *The Chilpī Ghāt series.*—Under this name have been grouped all the rocks in this District which were formerly designated 'Transition' The rocks comprising this series usually have a moderate to steep dip and consist:—(1) of sandstones, grits, conglomerates and shales, (2) of their metamorphosed equivalents, quartzites, schistose grits and conglomerates, quartz-schists, slates, phyllites and mica-schists, and (3) of hornblende-schists. They occupy a large proportion—almost one-half—of the District. The following areas of these rocks may be mentioned:—(1) the Wārāseonī-Bhīmlāt band, (2) the Hattā outlier, and (3) the Bhānpur-Bhanderī band. These form the northern and north-western portions of the Chilpis and consist usually of the more metamorphosed forms [ (2) above ]. There is in addition a great spread of these rocks in the southern part of the District around Lānji, Risewāra and Bijāgarh, where they frequently consist of the less metamorphosed facies [ (1) above ], and are, in addition, much disturbed by large intrusions of felsite and of basic rocks such as basalt. These intrusions are considered to have taken place partly during the deposition of the Chilpīs and partly after. There seems to be evidence to show that the basic rocks are intrusive with regard to, and therefore younger than, the felsites. These basic intrusives (some of them altered olivine-basalts) are found only in the southern parts of the District and are not to be confounded with the geologically much more recent extrusive basalts of the Deccan trap period, which occur in the extreme north-east of the District. Two miles south-west of Kinhi

is the northern end of a band of hornblende-schist running south-south-west, the remainder of which is situated in the Bhandāra District.

6. *Granite.*—In the south of the Lānji pargana around Kulpā, is the northern end of a large outcrop of unfoliated hornblende-granite that is situated chiefly in the Bhandāra District.

7. *Gneisses and crystalline schists.*—These rocks cover a very large proportion of the District not occupied by the Chilpīs and associated igneous rocks. They have been divided into two portions: the Baihar gneiss and the Chauria gneiss. The Chauria gneiss is really a foliated hornblende-granite and constitutes a large proportion of the crystalline rocks occurring as far north as the latitude of Bālāghāt, or the Warāseonī-Bhīmlāt band of Chilpis It is traversed by basic dykes, and is probably the equivalent of the Bundelkhand granite. The Baihar gneiss is a much more highly foliated series of rocks and includes biotite-gneiss and mica-schist. It occupies a large part of the District situated to the north of the Wārāseonī-Bhīmlāt band of Chilpis, *i.e.*, the country round Baihar and Paraswāra; and also the western prolongation of the District from Wārāseonī to Katangī. Certain evidence obtained indicates that the Baihar gneiss is, at least in part, only an extremely metamorphosed form of the Chilpīs, and that the Baihar gneiss and Chilpis are the oldest sediments of the District exhibiting different degrees of metamorphism, while the Chauria gneiss is younger than either. The latter was possibly the granite which caused the metamorphism of the Baihar gneiss and Chilpis. On this interpretation that portion of the Chilpīs [1] lying in the western parts of the District, and a portion of the Baihar gneiss are probably to be regarded as homotaxial with the Dhārwārs of Southern India.

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[1] It is not certain that rocks of younger age have not been included amongst the Chilpis in the south-eastern parts of the District.

17. The following economically valuable minerals and mineral substances have been found in the Bālāghāt District:—

Economic.

1. Aluminium-ore or Bauxite.
2. Asbestos.
3. Building stone.
4. Copper-ore.
5. Gold.
6. Iron-ore
7. Manganese-ore.
8. Mica.
9. Ochre
10. Road metal
11. Other minerals

1. *Aluminium-ore or bauxite.*— This and manganese-ore are the only two minerals of economic value which have yet been found in this District in large quantities. Bauxite has already been noticed under "Laterite" (p 16), but it is as well to mention that analyses made of this mineral from Rūpjhar and Samnāpur showed 51·62 and 54 20 per cent of alumina, with only 0·05 and 1·55 per cent silica respectively. This bauxite could be made use of in two ways. It could either be treated chemically for the preparation of pure alumina for export purposes. This would probably need a whole cycle of chemical industries to be set in operation for the process to be a commercial success. Or the alumina so obtained could be smelted in India, this necessitating a cheap supply of electric energy, to be obtained either by the use of natural water power or of cheap coal. Several bauxite concessions have been granted, but the large capital required for the processes mentioned above will probably prevent the working of these deposits in the immediate future.

2. *Asbestos* has been reported from Māte, but nothing is known as to its quality

3. *Building stone* —Throughout the District rocks are to be found which could be adapted to building purposes.

Among such rocks may be enumerated various varieties of gneiss and granite, basalt and laterite. The latter has frequently been used for culverts, but care is necessary when choosing this rock to avoid making use of the valuable aluminous varieties. Marble has been found near Bhānpur.

4. *Copper-ore.*—At Malānjkhandi are some old excavations for copper in a quartz lode, in which at the time of Dr King's visit (1886), only stains of green copper carbonate were to be found. A recent examination, however, revealed numerous specimens of carbonate and one of sulphide. Traces of copper carbonate also occur near Lorā and Khāra.

5. *Gold* washing is carried on in the Son, the Tāndā, the Banjar, the Jamunia, the Deo and the Nahara, as well as in other streams that run into them. The washers, called Sonjhurias, are said to make about 4 annas a day a head. The gold of the Jamunia is stated to be of a lighter colour, and less valuable than that of the other rivers.

6 *Iron.*—The ores of iron found in this District are mostly lateritic, but possibly ferruginous Chilpi shales have also been used as a source of iron, as specimens of hematite have been obtained from this formation at Ragholī in Siletokrī zamindāri. The Agharias smelt the ores "into rough semi-circular shapes called *chūlās*, averaging in weight about 10 lbs. each. These are sold in the bazars at the rate of two to four *chūlās* for the rupee." Iron smelting was widely practised all over the Dhansuā and Bhanpur forests, till the practice was prohibited in those belonging to Government. There are now only one or two furnaces working in Bhānpur.

7 *Manganese-ore.*—This, at present, is practically the only mineral product which is at all extensively worked in this District. Most of the deposits known occur in the western plain portions of the District as bands and lenticles enclosed in the metamorphic gneisses and schists. In these ore-bodies the manganese-ore is usually associated with manganese-silicates such as spessartite or manganese-garnet.

Of the large number of deposits located, the following are worthy of mention :—

1. Tirorī, Paonia and Jāmrāpāni.
2. Arjunī and Jām.
3. Ramramā.
4. Katangjhirī I (Government forest).
5. Katangjhirī II (Mālguzāri land).

Deposit No. 1 is particularly noteworthy, since the out-crop of manganese-ores has been traced at intervals for about 6 miles, in places as many as 5 parallel outcrops being visible. At Ramramā, also, there is a very fine deposit with an out-crop three-eighths of a mile long and 7 to 14 yards wide. In addition to these plain deposits, there occurs in the hill tracts a band of alternating layers of manganese-ore and quartzite, which forms a well-marked horizon near the junction of the Chilpis of the Wārāseonī-Bhīmlāt band and the underlying gneisses. This band was first detected by Colonel Bloomfield in the hills about 2 miles north-east of Bālāghāt town, where it can be traced for a distance of 1¾ miles. It has since been found at Laugur and at Ghoadī, some 14 miles to the north-north-east along the strike, and traced thence for about 6 miles to Ukua and Samnāpur, where it either temporarily dies out or is covered by laterite. Another 4 or 5 miles east of this point it has been again detected at Dharampur, so that this ore-band has been traced at intervals for a total distance of 25 miles. It is being exploited in two places. At Bharwelī, Hīrāpur and Mānegaon, just to the north-east of Balāghāt, extensive mining has been carried on for the past three years by the Central Provinces Prospecting Syndicate, and a large quantity of high-grade ore is exported yearly, the deposit being connected by a two-mile railway line with the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway at Bālāghāt, while at Gudmā, Ukua, and Samnāpur Messrs Burn and Co. are opening up the deposit. On the plain deposits a considerable amount of work has been done at Jāmrāpāni, Tirorī and Ramramā.

The ore obtainable from the plain deposits is mostly more or less highly crystalline braunite or a mixture of braunite and psilomelane, while in the hill deposits the ores are more largely psilomelane with subordinate braunite. Finely crystalline hollandite is found in the Bālāghāt deposit

8. *Mica.*—This mineral is to be found in the pegmatite veins which traverse the Baihar gneiss both parallel to and across its strike. The largest specimens yet obtained have been found near Chitādongrī and Bamni, and are three or four inches long by about two inches wide. The mica is muscovite and is sometimes associated with large crystals of black tourmaline. An attempt was made to work the deposit in 1871 by a Frenchman, with what result is not known. Prospecting has gone on recently with a view to its development.

9. *Ochre* or *gerū* is found to the west of the Sāletekrī hills, and is used by the people for dyeing, etc. Its mode of occurrence in that locality is not known, but just across the border in the Drug District, about 4 miles north of Rājākher, the *gerū* consists of ferruginous Chilpī shales Specimens of red ochre have been found in Ragholī in close proximity to pockets of a white soft substance resembling a partially disintegrated rock, and said to be suitable for use as china clay.

10 *Road Metal.*—Material suitable for this purpose is to be obtained in many parts of the District, in the form of gneiss, granite, quartzite and basalt. Good manganese-ore and bauxite have also been used for this purpose, but it is to be hoped that such a waste of the country's mineral resources will not be permitted in the future.

11. *Other minerals* —According to the Central Provinces Gazetteer for 1870, 'A few miles to the east of Būrha *surmā* (sulphide of antimony) occurs in large quantities. The latter is, however, of no value here, and no one takes the trouble to collect it' The *surmā* referred to above is in all probability not antimony sulphide, but the manganese-ore obtainable about 2 and 3 miles north-east of Bālāghāt.

Garnets have been found in the Baihar gneiss, while beautiful crystals of schorl or black tourmaline have been reported from Bhīri and Paraswāra Agates, chalcedony, jasper and zeolites are to be found in the Deccan Trap lava—flows in the north-east corner of the District, both *in situ* and in the stream-beds draining therefrom.

BOTANY.

18. To begin with the weeds of cultivation. In the open season nearly every black or brown soil rice field contains the trailing green stems and round purple flowers of the *mundī* or *Sphaeranthus indicus.* Another more troublesome weed, an import from America, is the *Xanthium strumarium*, which, however, does not flourish in rice land to the same extent as in Chhattīsgarh. The fruit is a burr, and where it occurs, it makes a second crop quite impossible. Where water has stood for long are seen the long straggling stems and feeble yellow flowers of *Sesbania aculeata*, called *dhandhāni* in Chhattīsgarh and *sclambrī* in Hoshangābād, but boasting no local name that can be discovered. More open black soil fields usually contain the common green Indian spurge, *Euphorbia pilulifera*, mostly known as *dudhai* from its milky juice, and the *Blumea lacera*, the commonest Indian variety of the groundsel family. The *Gnaphalium indicum*, a pretty little plant with whitish woolly leaves and brown flowers, much like an English cud-weed, is common in most parts of the District. A very troublesome weed parasitic on kodon, juār and sugarcane is the *agia* (*Striga lutea*), very much like the English eye-bright; its roots attach themselves to those of the plant on which it feeds. There is a well known proverb:—

Plants in cultivated land

'*Kodo men agia aur gaon men Bamnā*,' (as *agia* is in the kodon so is a Brāhman in the village)

The common village weeds are much the same as in other Districts.—*Argemone mexicana* or *Vilāvati dhotrā*, a plant with prickly leaves and yellow blossoms, an intro-

duction from America, yields a black seed that is sometimes used for oil, though it is not regularly sold as in Chhattisgarh. The two kinds of *tarotā bhāji*, *Cassia occidentalis* and *C. tora*, grow in profusion from the beginning of the rains and are among the numerous unpleasant vegetables that help the villager's *pot au feu*. Most cottage gardens contain a specimen of the *Ocimum sanctum* or *tulsī* plant. Another species of the same genus known in Chhattīsgarh and here as *memrī* and elsewhere as *mārwanī* is beautifully scented and its seeds make a pleasant summer drink.

Swampy spots below tanks and on the edge of brooks furnish two very common English plants, *Veronica anagallis*, the water speedwell, and *Polygonum glabrum*, a plant with pink blossoms and spotted leaves. Sandy river-beds are usually covered by the *jhau* or *Tamarix indica*, whose thick cover is a favourite haunt of peacock. The village tanks contain two fine species of waterlily known as *kamal* or *kokumbā* (*Nymphaea stellata* and *Nelumbium speciosum*), sacred to the God Siva; the seeds of the latter plant are eaten as a nut, while the white and succulent root stems are the villager's equivalent for seacale. *Trapa bispinosa*, the *singhāra*, is well known. Two very common water weeds found in most tanks and rivers are *Potamogeton indicus* and *Myriophyllum indicum*, much resembling the pond weed and myriophil of English rivers.

Turning to the trees of the village jungles we find the mahuā (*Bassia latifolia*), common everywhere save in black soil. Its uses are too well known to need description. The *chār*, (*Buchanania latifolia*) with its edible berry and nut is a useful tree. *Acacia arabica*, the *babūl*, is comparatively uncommon in this District owing to the lack of black soil. *Acacia farnesiana*, another *Acacia* more sweetly scented than the *babūl*, affords seeds which are used as goldsmith's weights. *Acacia Leucophlaea* (*hewrā*), a tall stout shrub or small tree with white blossoms, is common in most village waste lands; *Dichrostachys* with its spikes, partly of

yellow partly of red blossoms, is a particularly handsome shrub when in flower. The *Ficus glomerata* or *gūlar* with handsome peach coloured fruits, affords great joy to village urchins, who, as the local saying goes, eat it without looking inside, as it is usually full of all kinds of undesirable insects. *Anthocephalus cadamba*, the *kadamb*, sacred to Krishna, a large tree with globular yellow blossoms is occasionally found. Its flowers are of great repute as a love charm. Among trees which are more usually found planted in or round villages or on roadsides, the *shīsham* (*Dalbergia Sissoo*) which forms the avenue on the Gondia road, takes the first place in this District. The mango, *Mangifera indica*, is the most important fruit tree. A particularly fine variety of fruit is yielded by the grove at Lingā planted by Chimnā Patel, the leader of the Lānji revolt. *Eugenia jambolana*, the *jāmun*, with its laurel scented leaves and plum-like fruit comes into bearing in the beginning of the rains. Most villages boast a specimen of the *ber* (*Zizyphus jujuba*), while the *kabīth* (*Feronia elephantum*), the *bel* (*Aegle marmelos*) whose leaves are offered to Siva while its kernels are used to make lime mortar set, and the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*) are a little less common. The *bar*, *pākhar*, and pīpal (*Ficus indica*, *infectoria* and F. *religiosa*) form the trees of assembly in the centre of the village, and their presence in the jungle usually marks an old inhabited site

The *nīm* (*Melia Indica*), is a common village tree, and its fruit is often used in medicine. Its congener, *Melia azadirach*, the Persian lilac, with pale purple blossoms, is found in a few villages in Baihar. The *Euphorbia tirucalli* or milk bush (*niurang*) with smooth leafless green stems and poisonous milky juice, a denizen of Africa, is now commonly planted as a hedge. So is the *Euphorbia neriifolia* or *thua*, though the ordinary prickly pear (*Opuntia*) is not common in the District Another favourite roadside tree is the Cork tree or *Millingtonia hortensis*. The *champak* (*Michelia champaca*) also sacred to Siva, and

the favourite abode of the sacred snake, and the *kumhi*, *Careya arborea*, both flower-bearing trees, are often planted in village gardens. *Solanum indicum* with prickly leaves, purple flowers and yellow berries is found almost every where and with its kinsmen the *Dhatura fastuosa* and *D. stramonium* rejoices in the rich soil round the village rubbish heaps.

Denizens of forests and waste lands.

19. The beautiful little *Evolvulus alsinoides* growing flat on the ground, with brilliant blue flowers, of the colour of the English speedwell, is far the most attractive denizen of the village waste lands.

The *Echinops echinatus*, a singular prickly headed plant with straggling stems and purple blossoms, is common both on waste and cultivated land and in all sorts of soil. *Oxalis corniculata*, the yellow bird foot sorrel, a not uncommon English plant with brown green leaves and yellow blossoms is to be found on gravelly soils.

*Martynia diandra*, the *bāgnak*, an American introduction, is common in waste places and field borders It has a pretty pink blossom and a formidable double clawed seed, while its oily smell and feel mark it as a near relation of the *tilli* plant. The most conspicuous wild flower of the village waste, however, is the *Careya herbacea* or *bhui kumhi*, found in Baihar. It has a very large and handsome blossom, nearly white, with a mass of pendulous anthers; looking something like a passion flower growing close to the ground. It flowers in April.

Among the more ordinary parasites and climbers found outside the jungle are the *Orobanche indica*, called *bhutta* from its fancied resemblance to a maize cob. This infests most alluvial tobacco gardens. The *Loranthus longiflorus* with its mass of leaves and orange scarlet blossoms is found on most *chār* and mahuā trees and there is some reason to believe that it is increasing and seriously injuring mahuā trees in many parts of the country.

Finally, there is the *Cuscuta reflexa* or *amarbel* whose golden wire-like stems hanging from the trees are one of the most beautiful sights of the cold weather.

Turning now to the denizens of the jungle, the principal timber tree of the District, the *sāl* (*Shorea robusta*), is mainly confined to the north of the Baihar tahsīl, where its fresh green is a delight to the eye in the hot weather. The teak (*Tectona grandis*), grows only along the Bāgh, Son and Waingangā, though a few trees are found scattered over various places in Baihar. The *sāj* (*Terminalia tomentosa*) and the *tendū* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) are found nearly everywhere, the fresh green and pink shoots of the latter springing up in open ground as the hot weather begins. The *dhaurā* (*Anogeissus latifolia*), the *lendia* (*Lagerstroemia parviflora*) and the *tinsā* (*Ougeinia dalbergioides*) are very common in most jungles. The *bīja* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) is a little less common. Of trees valuable for other reasons than their timber, there is the *palās* (*Butea frondosa*) whose roots are used as rope and whose leaves carry the lac insect The two *myrobalans* (*Terminalia chebula* and *T. belerica*) with their unpleasant smelling blossoms and green nuts are common in Baihar, while the *kusum* (*Schleichera trijuga*), which puts forth beautiful crimson foliage in the hot weather, yields the best kind of lac. The *aonlā* (*Phyllanthus emblica*), whose sour berries are made into chutney, is everywhere common.

Among the less useful trees are the *kar ha.* (*Sterculia urens*) with bare branches and papery bark and the *salai* (*Boswellia serrata*). Most nullahs are fringed by a growth of the melancholy looking *Terminalia arjuna* or *khawā* that reminds one forcibly of the English alder. The *Phoenix acaulis* and *P. humilis* with their red and yellow berries are the only palms at all common in the District. The Gonds carefully preserve them when they occur in their fields, tying up the leaves to keep them out of the way. They are very fond of the fruit. Among flowering trees in the jungle, are the *Bauhinia variegata* or *kachnār*, used as a cooling medicine, with

sweetly scented blossoms, white and pink, something like those of an azalea, and flowering in March; the *Gardenia lucida* or *dikāmāli* whose gum is reputed as a remedy for various diseases of cattle, the *Bombax malabaricum* (*semar*) or silk cotton, whose root is eaten while young and whose flower buds also furnish a vegetable, and the *Cochlospermum gossypium* (*gongli*) with brilliant yellow flowers, worshipped at the Shivrātri. The *Woodfordia floribunda* is very gay in March with its rows of small scarlet blossoms.

Most beautiful of all is the *amaltās* (*Cassia fistula*) whose drooping golden clusters deserve the title "Dropping wells of gold" far better than the English laburnum. The commonest jungle creeper is the *Bauhinia Vahlii*, or *mohlain*, whose leaves serve as plates, whose bark is used for rope, and whose seeds are parched and eaten by the Gonds. The *Acacia pennata*, or *chechwā*, a prickly climber, and the *Butea superba* or climbing *palās* are two of the more common large creepers; while near the stems of trees or shrubs may be found during the rains the *Asparagus racemosus* or *nārbod* which is worshipped at the Giri festival. The *Smilax macrophylla* with its thorny cane-like stem, known as *rāmdatūn* or Rām's tooth brush, is found in the high-lying forests, while the *Viscum angulatum*, a plant much like the English mistletoe, occurs in the forests of the Son valley. There are numerous flowering plants and herbs in the jungles of this District; *Lavandula burmanni*, the wild lavender, flowers in April, while just before the rains break, some extremely beautiful lilies and orchids appear. The *Crinum ensifolium*, with its heads of six or eight magnificent and sweetly scented white blossoms; the *Costus speciosus*, rather like the last, but of a more drooping habit and mostly confined to the banks of streams; and the *Curcuma montana* or wild *haldī*, with leafless heads of yellow white flowers, topped by a handsome pink coma, are the most beautiful of these. A white *Habenaria* is the commonest ground orchid, while various *Epiphytes* are found on the trees. The *Curculigo orchioides* with small yellow blossoms and fluted palm-like leaves and

the *Leea sambucina*, though not boasting much blossom, yet add, by their graceful foliage, to the beauties of the jungle in the early rains.

Bamboos.

20. The two bamboos of this District are the *bāns* (*Dendrocalamus strictus*) and the *kattang*, or thorny bamboo (*Bambusa arundinacea*). The first named occurs in enormous quantities in almost all forest areas in the District. It is exceedingly useful for all sorts of purposes and has begun to be exported in large quantities to Nāgpur. The bamboos, tied in bundles, are either carted from where they are cut, or, where the ghāts are very steep, are removed by means of slides to the nearest cart track. *Kattangs* are still found, though not in great quantities, at Chacheri, on the Deo river near Bhānpur, and at Bijāgarh along the Son. Up to 1869-70, these bamboos were a conspicuous feature of the District scenery, and the beauties of the deep pools in the Deo and Son overhung with lofty clumps of *kattang* were perpetuated by the talented brush of Sir Richard Temple. In 1869, every *kattang* tree in the District seeded, and the green of their foliage was changed to a silvery white; hundreds of tons of the seed were collected and eaten by the people who were then in the throes of a severe famine. Next year all the trees died, and fell down in indescribable confusion. All *kattang* trees taken from Bālāghāt and transplanted to other Districts died at the same time. Quantities of seed were sown and the seedlings sent all over India and even to England. In the jungles, however, though the ground was soon covered with grass-like seedlings, yet it was so thickly overgrown with other species, that the young *kattangs* could never make head but died away. The Baigās count the age of their oldest men by the number of *kattang* crops they have eaten.

Grasses.

21. The Bālāghāt District being generally hilly and covered to a large extent by forest favours the growth of a variety of

grasses useful and otherwise. The majority of these are in growth during the rainy season. The tops of the hills, which often form extensive plateaus, are generally covered by long and coarse grasses of the less useful kinds. The valleys and plains, especially where the soil is good and retains sufficient moisture for a large part of the year, produce the best kinds of fodder grasses Bālāghāt being a rice-producing District, agriculturists feed their cattle mostly on rice straw, and pay little attention to the preservation of fodder grasses. The smaller grass tracts and *bīrs* adjacent to villages are mostly utilised by the villages as pasture grounds. The plateaus in the Baihar tahsīl are burnt annually by the Forest Department, the new growth from the roots of the burnt grasses providing good feed not only for the cattle of the neighbouring villages, but for large numbers of cattle from the Raipur, Seonī and Chhindwara Districts which migrate here annually.

Among the grasses suitable for use as hay, the following are the most important. *Kāndi* grass belongs to the *Chlorideae* tribe, and resembles *dūb* (*Cynodon dactylon*) in some characteristics. The only difference is that it grows from 18 to 24 inches high and is suited for hay, while *dub* creeps on the surface of the ground and cannot be so used. It is excellent feed for cattle and horses. It is found in the Chacherī and Mairā reserves (Paraswāra range), at Bitlī in Raigarh, and at Bhīmlāt in the Baihar range it occurs more often than not on black cotton soil.

*Masān grass* (*Iseilema laxum*) is one of the best kinds of grasses, much liked by cattle, whether green, as feed, or dry, as hay. It grows mixed with *kel* (*Andropogon annulatus*) and other annual grasses, on low-lying and swampy grounds all over the District. It makes very good hay if cut in December and January. It is said that wherever this grass is found wheat can be grown.

*Gandhelā* (*Iseilema Wightii*) or *ghormasān* is very similar to *Iseilema laxum*, but usually more diffuse and often

quite prostrate. It grows more or less pure on moist and rich soil in the reserved forests and on the dams of rice fields in the plains. It is much relished by horses. The stem and spikelets of the grass are reddish in colour, which gives it a conspicuous look from a considerable distance; it is most frequently found on black soils.

*Kel malīyār* (*Andropogon annulatus*) grows in this District mixed with *masān* grass and is found only on black soil and where there is sufficient moisture. It is as good as *masān* grass for fodder. In some respects it resembles *kāndi* grass, but the stems are thicker and light reddish in colour. It grows profusely, throwing out several shoots from one root and gives cultivators a good deal of trouble to weed out.

*Gunher grass* (*Anthistiria scandens*) is a common kind of grass found all over the District on sandy soils, especially on flat ground. There are two varieties. The one is found on the banks of nullahs, and on moist and rich soil: it grows very tall and becomes so thick that it loses its quality as a fodder grass, but is much used for thatching purposes. The other is found in grass reserves where the soil is not very moist, and generally attains the height of *masan* grass, with thin stems and thick clusters of leaves and spikelets; it makes very good hay if cut in December and January.

*Heteropogon contortus* (known as *lampā*, *kusal*, *parwā*, or *sukar*), is the well-known spear grass, and is found in abundance all over the District in the plains and on the plateaus. It grows very high in this District, sometimes on good soil attaining a height of 5 feet. It is used as fodder both before and after it has flowered, but it makes good hay only if it is cut and stacked just before it is full grown and before it seeds. It flourishes best on sandy soils. In this District oil is not extracted from it.

*Serwā*, *sain* (*Ischaemum laxum*) is found all over the hilly parts of the District. Cattle eat it when young. It is suitable for hay only before it flowers.

The fodder grasses which are useful only when green are the following:—

*Ghūr, chohā, yerwā* (*Oplismenus burmanni*).—This grass grows under the shade of large trees and bamboos. It is grazed over by cattle, but is considered to be an inferior kind of grass.

*Sawān grass* (*Setaria glauca*) is the pigeon or bottle grass of America. It is a common grass and grows during the rainy season near the villages on good culturable soil. It is a good fodder grass. Its grain is also used as food by the poor.

*Chuchutā, laptī* (*Setaria verticillata*) is a coarse kind of grass an annual easily distinguishable from the other species of *Setaria* by the downward direction of the teeth on the bristles. This is a common grass and grows near villages; the thorny spikes stick to the clothes on contact. When young and before the spikes come out, it is eaten by cattle.

*Samā grass* (*Panicum colonum*) is found in abundance during the rains and is considered a more nutritive fodder than any other kind of grass, but is never preserved. It flowers and fruits in September and lasts for a month.

*Kāns, kushā*, or *padār* (*Saccharum spontaneum*) is a tall perennial grass with a creeping rootstock. The quantity of wool which surrounds the base of the spikelets renders this plant a conspicuous object; it is common in the plains, especially in black soil fields, on the banks of nullahs and in damp places. Buffaloes and elephants eat it when young. Other cattle also eat this grass when other fodder grasses are not found. It is distinguished by its height and white feathery heads, and whether owing to the harder soil or the infrequency of open field cultivation in black soils, is not as troublesome a weed here as in the Nerbudda valley.

*Ojas* or *khas* (*Andropogon muricatus*) is a perennial grass of which the roots are composed of spongy brownish coloured fibres. It grows in the Bālāghāt District near tanks, on the banks of nullahs and on low-lying moist ground. It is

not cut and stacked as fodder, but it is eaten by cattle. The grass is used to some extent for thatching purposes and its root is the well-known *khas* used for tatties during the hot weather. It was exported in 1906 to Jubbulpore by rail.

*Pasahi* (*Hygrorhiza aristata*) grows in pools of water and in tanks. Cattle eat the grass and the poorer classes its grain.

*Gurlū*, *kasehī* (*Coix Lachryma*) is a tall erect water grass, 4 to 6 feet high, with large cordate leaves at the base This grass grows on the banks of nullahs and on wet ground. Its seed is white with a hard shell over it: the grass when green is eaten by elephants and buffaloes; peacocks are very fond of its seeds, which are also dyed and used as ornaments.

*Bharrū* (*Anthistiria arundinacea*) is a tall perennial grass, 6 to 12 feet or more in height. It is found on wet ground and along the banks of nullahs. Cattle eat the young leaves, and the stem is used for native pens, but those made of it are not of such good quality as those made from *kathi* grass which grows along river banks.

*Dūb* (*Cynodon dactylon*) is a small glaucous perennial grass, with creeping stem, rooting at the nodes. It is an excellent fodder grass and is much used for lawns

*Gunher*, *kusal*, *kāns*, *serwā* and *chīr*, are also largely used for thatching purposes.

The following grasses are useful for other purposes :—

*Som* or *bhabar* (*Pollinia eriopoda*) which grows only in forests and on the hills, is largely used for making ropes by the villagers It is found in abundance in the Charherī, Sālebharri and Khora reserves.

*Rūsa* or *tikhāri*, (*Andropogon Schoenanthus*), which is easily recognised by the bright red colour of its bracts and its characteristic lemon scent, is found in many places in this District, but is of an inferior kind, and oil is not extracted from it In the Betūl, Nimār and Hoshangābād Districts the oil is extracted and sells at a very high price. It is also a very good fodder grass and is much liked by horses.

*Bhurbhuria* or *bharbusi* (*Eragrostis plumosa*) is a useless grass; it is common in the plains and hills on saline soil; when dry it is a nuisance in reserved forest, as it is highly inflammable. It is eaten when young by cattle.

In the rice fields several grasses are found.

*Murdī* (*Ischaemum rugosum*) is so much like the rice plant that they are not to be distinguished till they are in flower.

*Kolha, kolhāti* or *suria* (*Elytrophorus articulatus*) is considered by the cultivators to be very injurious to the crops. It generally grows in kodon or rice fields. The leaf has a sharp cutting edge.

*Gangrua* (*Andropogon pachyarthrus*) grows on sandy soils, specially in kodon and kutkī fields. It is considered a fair fodder grass for cattle but not for horses.

*Makraulā* or *ghorchobā* (*Eleusine indica*) resembles the cultivated *Eleusine corocana.* It is cut and used as fodder.

*Asāra* (*Eragrostis elegantula*) grows in the jungle as well as in fields. It is used for brooms and cattle eat it either fresh or dry.

## FAUNA.

Wild animals.

22. *Macacus Rhesus* (*bandar*) is the common monkey of Northern India from the Himālayās to the Godāvari river. It is found in all parts of the Bālāghāt District. It usually lives near the banks of rivers and nullahs. *Semnopithecus entellus*, the *langūr*, is found in all parts of the District. This monkey does not confine itself to rivers and nullahs but may be seen in dense jungle away from water. It does great damage to the crops, but being sacred is not destroyed. This monkey can be tamed if taken young.

*Felis tigris* (*sher, bāgh*) is found in all parts of the District, more especially to the north and west where the jungles march with those of Mandlā and Seoni. It is destructive to cattle as well as to game but seldom to man unless wounded. Game-killing tigers are more numerous than cattle-lifters. Man-eaters are occasionally met with

and there is one at present which does great damage by fits and starts in the Baihar tahsīl. Tigers wander a good deal in the cold and rainy seasons, but usually select special haunts in the hot weather, and when one is shot another takes its place in a short time. They do not attain any exceptional size in this District. A large number are shot annually. They are bold in pursuit of game and one has been known to carry off a wounded *chītal* stag that was being tracked by a sportsman in broad daylight They mate at two seasons of the year, from October to November in the cold weather and again in April and May They drop their young in May and June, and December and January. Gestation therefore takes about eight months. They usually have from one to three cubs; four almost fully developed cub-*foeti* have been taken from a dead tigress, but never more than two at a time have been seen living with a tigress, though three have been heard of. Cubs usually make their first kills by hamstringing or emasculating their victims. Mr. Percival, Forest Divisional Officer, is of opinion that tigers are occasionally killed by wild dogs, a case being alleged to have occurred near where he was encamped in the hot weather of 1905. Baigās have told him that they have been eye-witnesses of such fights. Occasionally when starting out to roam the jungles in the afternoon, the tiger gives a peculiar call like a sāmbhar.

*Felis Pardus*, the panther (*tendwā* or *chuta*), is found in great numbers all over the District Panthers are more numerous than tigers and hence are more destructive to cattle. They are very fond of carrying off dogs. The Baigās and Gonds say that there are two kinds, differing as to habit and size, and that the smaller one (the leopard) keeps near villages, while the larger one (the panther) is found further in the jungle. The panther is certainly killed by wild dogs on occasion. Mr. Percival has personally known cases of their being treed by wild dogs, but the panther occasionally turns the tables Panthers are agile tree climbers.

*Felis chaus*, the jungle cat, is found commonly in all parts of the District, and is very destructive to peafowl, partridges, hares and all ground game.

*Viverricula malaccensis* (the small Indian civet) is found in several parts of the District. It is easily tamed.

*Herpestes mungo* (*neolā*), the mongoose, is found in all parts of the District in large numbers: and is easily tamed. It is very destructive to poultry and snakes.

*Hyæna striata*, the striped hyæna, is found in all parts of the District. It has been known to carry off dogs

*Canis aureus*, the jackal, is found everywhere.

*Cyon dukhunensis*, the Indian wild dog, is found in the jungles. It is extremely destructive to game, which it drives away from any neighbourhood it may haunt. Fifteen were killed in 1904-05. A case was reported lately of their killing a tiger and as eye-witnesses among the Baigās vouch for the truth of this on similar occasions, there seems no reason to disbelieve it. A popular belief is that when they attack a tiger they soak their tails in their own urine which is very acrid, and by flicking their tails in the tiger's face they blind it momentarily and so have it at their mercy Each pack has a recognised leader whose duty it is to head the final attack on any quarry. In attacking tiger or panther they escape injury by making huge bounds in the air. Even in captivity their jumping powers are extraordinary.

The Baigā legend of the origin of the tiger and wild dog is that the latter were created by Mahadeo from a handful of wood chips from some tree he was whittling in the forest, and that they pursued two tigers created and sent by Parvati to fetch Mahadeo back to the hut where she was; to save the tigers she pushed burning brands in their faces as they tried to get inside the hut, and so gave them black muzzles, which they have possessed ever since; hence also the feud between tigers and wild dogs

*Vulpes bengalensis*, the Indian fox, is found in all parts of the District

*Lutra vulgaris or Lutra Nain*, the common otter, is found in all parts of the District in rivers and nullahs.

*Melursus ursinus*, the sloth or Indian bear. is found all over the District. It lives in caves in the hot and wet weather and when it has young In the cold season it makes its lair in grass or bushes or on hillsides among the rocks. In the mahua season it can be shot on its way from mahuā trees. It is shy of man, but dangerous when suddenly and unexpectedly aroused at close quarters. Bull terriers will hold a bear easily, as it seems to lose its head at such an attack. A tiger has been known to kill a bear. Bears occasionally feed on carrion.

*Lepus ruficaudatus* (*sassa*), the common hare, is found in all parts of the District.

Deer and antelopes.

23. *Boselephas tragocamelus*, the *nīlgai*, is found in all parts of the District.

*Tetracerus quadricornis*, the fourhorned antelope, is found almost everywhere.

*Antilope cervicapra*, the black buck, is not common; the heads also are small, not exceeding 22 inches. It is often found in *sāl* jungle, where it seems partly to change its habits.

*Gazella bennettii*, the Indian gazelle, is found in nearly all parts of this District.

*Cervulus muntjac*, the rib-faced or barking deer, is found in most parts.

*Cervus axis*, the spotted deer or *chītal*, is fairly common in the lower parts of the District and along the banks of rivers; it forms the special prey of native *shikāris* as it usually haunts the borders of forest in the vicinity of villages.

*Cervus duvaucli*, the swamp deer. is found in all parts where *sāl* forest exists and also, in one case, in mixed forest and bamboo jungle. Probably it has migrated thither at some time.

The mouse deer (*mungwari*) is fairly common where it occurs at all, but is local.

Photo Etching College Roorkee.

DOE BARA-SINGHA DRINKING FROM THE HALON RIVER.

*Cervus unicolor*, the sāmbhar or *rūsa* deer (*dhāk*) is found everywhere. The stag is very shy. Mr. Percival doubts if it drops its antlers every year. Good heads are found in this District.

*Sus cristatus*, the Indian wild boar, is found everywhere and is very destructive to crops.

A herd of wild cattle, the descendants of domesticated animals, live in the Hirrī jungles, and are very destructive to crops. Religious prejudice prevents any one from killing them, while they are not easy to catch and impossible to tame when caught. They are larger and in better condition than domestic cattle, which they otherwise resemble.

24. Turning to the birds of the District, the sand-grouse (*Pterocles exustus*) occurs almost everywhere in the season. They can generally be found near water in the evening. They do not breed in this District. *Pavo cristatus*, the common peafowl, is found in all parts of the District. It is not considered sacred by either Hindus or Muhammadans, both of whom destroy it. *Galloperdix spadiceus*, the red spur fowl, is found in jungle all over the District; it is a very shy bird, and when disturbed escapes as a rule by running and not on the wing. *Francolinus vulgaris*, the black or common partridge, is found all over the District. *Ortygornis pondicerianus*, the grey or spotted partridge, is found everywhere. It is easily tamed and often seen in cages. It is not a very choice feeder.

Birds.

*Perdicula Asiatica*, the jungle or bush quail, is found in all parts of the District. *Coturnix coromandelica*, the rain quail, is found in places; it has a peculiar call.

*Turnix dussumieri*, the button-quail, is common. These birds rise once only and have a single note.

Several varieties of sand plovers are found here, but they have not been identified.

*Grus antigone*, the *sāras* crane, is common in all parts of the District and is usually met with in pairs; it is very tame

and the popular idea is that if one is killed or dies, the other will die too of grief for the loss of its mate. Snipe are found in marshy places below tanks, but there is no particularly good snipe ground in the District, and large bags must not be looked for. *Gallinago coelestis*, the fantail or common snipe, is of local occurrence and is nowhere found in large numbers. *Gallinago gallinula*, the jack snipe, is met with occasionally. *Rhynchoea bengalensis*, the painted snipe, is sometimes seen. *Numenius aequata*, the common curlew, is very common; other varieties are also found. *Geronticus papillosus*, the king curlew or black ibis, is found in all parts of the District.

The District with its numerous tanks is a very fair one for ducks. *Nettopus coromandelianus*, the cotton or white-bodied teal, is very common and is found in considerable numbers on tanks throughout the year It breeds in this District. *Dendrocygna arcuata*, the whistling teal, is very common and is found in all parts throughout the year. It breeds in this District *Casarca rutila*, the Brahmini duck, is only found in the cold season It occurs usually in pairs, and mostly along river banks *Anas boschas*, the mallard, is common in the cold season. *Branta rufina*, the red-crested pochard, and *Fuligula cristata*, the tufted pochard, are found in small numbers in the cold season. *Podiceps minor*, the dab chick, is very common. *Querquedula crecca*, the common teal, is very common in the cold season.

A rogue elephant.

25. The destruction of the so called man-eating elephant. (November 1871) by Captain Bloomfield and Mr. Naylor, was an occurrence which deserves more than a passing mention A long and interesting account will be found in the Central Provinces Gazette of 16th December 1871. This elephant escaped from Ellichpur about the year 1851, and made its way to Chhindwara, where the Rajā of Nāgpur tried to capture it. It went on into the Dhansuā and Bhaisānghāt hills, where it remained till 1871 without doing much damage,

when it suddenly developed a most destructive tendency, and, before it was killed, destroyed some 41 persons in Bālāghāt and Mandlā. In the former District just before it was destroyed it killed 20 persons in a little over a week, traversing the District from the Mandlā border past Baihar and Bhanderī, down the Bhārāpur ghāt to Kosmāra where the two officers who had pursued it for days finally came up with it and despatched it.

Two brief extracts from Captain Bloomfield's spirited description are appended, to show the bloodthirsty nature of the animal and the reign of terror that it caused in the District

'After the performance above described, the elephant 'went off in the direction of Mate, breaking down every '*machān* he met with. The noise of the breaking of the '*machān* posts was heard by one Mānga Marār, who, getting 'down from his *machān*, gave the alarm to Dhansingh Gond, 'the nearest watchman, and ran off to the village In the '*machān* with Dhansingh were his two nephews, Dhondū 'and Dākala, lads about 12 years of age. They all descend-'ed and ran off. The boy Dhondu hid behind a field em-'bankment, and the elephant passed without seeing him and 'went after the other two Dhansingh ran away into the 'jungle, and hid himself in some scrubby bushes but the ele-'phant found him out, and coming up placed his foot on him 'so as to scrape the skin off and bruise considerably his left 'shoulder, ribs, and knees and tumble him into a nullah. 'Dhansingh then became insensible, and does not know what 'took place afterwards, but from enquiry it appears that 'after, as he thought, crushing Dhansingh, the elephant, see-'ing the boy Dākala running away, pursued and killed him' 'The man Dhansingh recovered his senses shortly afterwards 'and made his way to the village, but on the 10th instant, 'when he appeared before me to tell his story, he was so 'bruised and disabled that he could not move from the cart 'in which he came. The body of the boy Dākala was found

'entirely smashed up into an almost shapeless mass, every 'bone appeared broken.

'The elephant then went on to and pushed over a '*machān* in which one Rāmu Marār and his nephew were 'sleeping. The man and the boy fell in the straw below, but 'the former remaining quite still where he fell, the elephant, 'after scraping off the skin of his forehead with his foot and 'slightly bruising his right leg, seized the boy, and killing 'him, deposited or threw the body some fifty yards away, 'where it was found next morning with the skull all smashed 'sideways, the chest crushed, and both the legs broken. 'Thence the brute went on and killed a Marar's servant who 'was watching in the fields. This awoke a Marār named 'Motī who was sleeping with his servant in the next *machān*. 'They got up, but before they could move the elephant was 'upon them Once the *machān* was lifted up, but it settled 'down into its place again, but the second heave turned it 'over and sent the occupants flying. Both got up and Motī 'leading, they ran towards the village. On came the elephant 'after them and overtaking them, seized the servant who 'was behind and killed him. His master heard the poor 'fellow cry out that the elephant was killing him, but ran on 'all the faster, and, after tumbling over several times in his 'flight, arrived in the village and gave the alarm. The body 'of the servant was found the next morning; the legs and 'arms were twisted to pieces and were lying anyhow over 'the body, the face was smashed flat, and the ends of the 'broken ribs were sticking out through the skin on either side.

'After this the elephant left Mate and turned westward 'to the village of Kesā. An hour or two afterwards (*i.e.*, 'about 3 A.M on the morning of Saturday the 4th) a Par-'dhān of Kesā named Adkū who was sleeping with his wife 'in his *machān*, was awakened by a Marār calling out that 'the elephant was coming Both got down and ran for the 'village. The man had just got to his house when hearing 'his wife who was behind, calling out "Ganesh Deo! Ganesh

'Deo! Let me go, let me go"! he rushed out and saw the 'elephant inside the enclosure, with the woman in his 'trunk. He was lifting her up above his back and smashing 'her down on the ground On seeing the man, the brute 'dropped the woman and pursued him, but he escaped into the village In the meantime the Marār who had given the 'alarm had started off to rouse his son who was watching in 'the fields. The elephant seeing him going pursued and 'killed him The people in the village heard him shrieking 'out to Ganesh Deo to let him go * * * *

'About the time the elephant had treed the Pinjāra, a 'rumour reached the bazar at Dhaidi that the elephant was 'coming. The effect was instantaneous and magical, and a 'regular stampede commenced; the people assembled for 'the weekly market day scampered off in every direction, 'some leaving their property behind altogether, others leaving their own and taking that belonging to others, and a few 'taking both their own and their neighbour's also The 'scene is described by those who saw it as something never 'to be forgotten'

## RAINFALL AND CLIMATE

Rainfall

26. The rains are very heavy in Bālāghāt save in Katangi and below the Sonewāni hills. The prevailing direction from which the rain clouds come is from the north-west in the rains and the north in the cold weather In the former case, the clouds come over the Sonewāni hills, which they often favour with plentiful showers while the plain below suffers from a short rainfall. The past history of Katangī and Karolā has always been one of short and uncertain rainfall, and it is this part of the District that has suffered most severely from famine. Rainfall has only been gauged in Katangi since 1900 and the average fall has been 40·9 inches. Next to Katangi, the rainfall is shortest in North Karolā: it increases as the Waingangā is reached. and in the town of Balaghāt just

below the hills averages 64 inches, of which the very high proportion of 50 inches falls up to the end of August.

The clouds impinge against the long line of cliffs, covered in the rains with fresh green vegetation, and very heavy precipitation results. It is not quite so heavy at Lānji, though it seems a little more certain here in a dry year, probably because the rain clouds are intercepted in the angle between the Chauria and Bhādra hills, while there is no doubt some indraught up the steep-sided valley of the Son.

This heavy rainfall in the early and mid monsoon is particularly advantageous to rice transplantation, which demands a maximum amount of rain in August.

The averages for Balāghāt and Lānji are compared below:—

| | Balāghāt. | Lānji. |
|---|---|---|
| 1889-90 to 1893-94 ... | 75 | 62 |
| 1896-97 ... .. | 56 | 64 |
| 1899-00 ... ... | 33 | 34 |

The Lānji rain-gauge was established in 1873 and the average fall for the last 9 years has been 51·04 inches. The difference between the rainfall of Baihar and that of Bālāghāt is not great. The figures for Baihar for the same years as above are:—

| | Baihar |
|---|---|
| 1889-90 to 1893-94 ... ... ... | 66 |
| 1896-97 ... ... ... | 65 |
| 1899-00 ... ... ... | 27 |

Baihar is surrounded by jungle; but owing to its lying just east of Tīpāgarh hill it probably gets a lower rainfall than Bhīmlat which is further to the east: and transplantation is usually later there than to the south and east.

Climate

27. The climate of the District varies considerably, owing to the differences in its elevation. The plains, which in spite of their high cultivation are not badly wooded, are pleasant until the latter end of February, but are decidedly hot and

oppressive through the months of April, May and June. The Baihar plateau is probably some eight or nine degrees cooler than the plains, and the Raigarh plateau, or at least such parts of it as are not entirely denuded of jungle, is cooler still. There are many spots surrounded by hills and jungle such as Sūpkhār and Laugur, whose climate can compare favourably with Pachmarhī, though the first is only 2,300 feet and the latter 1,900 feet in altitude. The immediate proximity of extensive, green, and well watered jungle tends greatly to reduce the temperature: and the month of May is by no means unpleasant under canvas in Baihar provided good shade can be secured. The rigour of the cold weather in these upland jungles is extreme; ice half an inch thick frequently forms at night in exposed situations: and young trees, unless well shaded by other vegetation, are cut down by frost year after year. Damage even to large trees of the *char*, mahuā and *sāl* species is far from uncommon: and arboriculture is attended by special difficulties. Frosts are not common in the plains, though some of the more delicate crops such as *popat* occasionally suffer in this way if growing near the hills. On the whole, the plain parts of the District in the cold and hot seasons are cooler than Nāgpur. But the reverse is the case in the rains, when, owing to the number of rice fields and trees surrounding the station of Bālāghat, and to the hills which come close to it, the temperature does not fall so rapidly as in Nāgpur directly the rains have fairly set in

## CHAPTER II.

## HISTORY AND ARCHÆOLOGY.

### HISTORY.

Local inscription

28 The only local inscription which throws any light on the earliest history of the District, is too doubtfully connected with it to be of much help. In the year 1905 a *sanad* on three copper plates inscribed on both sides, and hung on a stout copper ring, was dug up at Ragholī in the Sāletekri zamīndāri The following is an extract from a translation of it kindly furnished by Mr. Hīra Lal: 'The vanquisher of foes, having killed 'the self-conceited and cruel king of the Kāshis (tribe) took 'Kāshi (Benares) from him. His son known by the name 'of Jayavardhan I, who was the best of kings, having killed 'the lord of the Vindhyas made the latter his residence for 'a long time To him was born Shrīvardhan who was the 'lord of the Vindhyas, who possessed immovable (permanent) 'wealth, like the immovable Vindhya mountain itself, who 'banished poverty by gifts of elephants to others and 'augmented the prosperity of various other great families. 'His son, who was skilled in destroying all his enemies, and 'who was a treasury of virtue, was called Jayavardhan II, who 'having worshipped the Brāhmans in the village Khaddika in 'the province (or district) of Katerak, issues a command to the 'inhabitants and other householders as well as revenue col- 'lectors—

'Let it be known to you that this village is given by us 'to the holy temple of the sun situated in Chattullih, with 'all the hidden treasures and deposits, together with the 'rights of taking dues, with prohibition for the regular or 'irregular forces to enter the village, with fines leviable 'on the ten offences free from all troubles, to be enjoyed 'as long as the sun, the moon and the stars endure.' Mr.

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Hira Lāl indentifies Khaddikā with Khādi, an adjoining village of the Gandai zamindāri: and thinks it possible that the correct reading may be, not Chattullih, but Raghullih (or Ragholi). There are remains of very ancient buildings extending over some acres of ground in and near Ragholi.

These inscriptions are often carried about from one place to another by the family to whom the grant was originally made it is not certain that the places named in the inscription are to be found in or near Sāletekri. On the other hand, the inscription obviously relates to a race of Rajput invaders of the Central Provinces, probably from Orissa, and is believed to date from either the 8th or 9th century It is thus possible that the dynasty in question may at one time have held sway over the District.

Early traditions

29. The earliest authentic tradition relates to a race of Haihayas, ruling at Lānji and thought to have been related to the Ratanpur Haihayavansis. Either they were conquered by the Gonds from Mandlā, and withdrew into Chhattisgarh, or they connected themselves with them by marriage There is a story of Jādho Rai Sā, an official of the Lānji court, who was led by a dream to leave Lānji and settle at Mandlā. Here he married the daughter of Dhero Sā, the Gond king, who after reigning for 50 years abdicated in favour of his son-in law.

The following account, taken from a paper by Sir W. Sleeman written in 1837 for the Asiatic Society's Journal, contains the existing information regarding this ancient and once powerful family and their absorption by the Gonds:—

'These princes trace back their origin in the person of 'Jādu Rai to the year *Samvat* 415 or A D 358, when by the death of his father-in-law, the Gond Rājā Nāgdeo, he 'succeeded to the throne of Garhā. Mandlā was added to 'their dominion by Gopal Sā, the tenth in descent from that 'prince, about the year A D. 634, in the conquest of the dis- 'trict of Mārugarh from the Gond chiefs who had succeeded

More probably 664 A D as the Chedi *Samvat* is most likely referred to

'to the ancient Haihayavansi sovereigns of Ratanpur and 'Lānji. That this ancient family of Rājputs who still reign 'at these places, reigned over Mandlā up to the year A. D. '144[1] or *Samvat* 201, was ascertained from an inscription in 'copper dug up during the reign of Nizām Sā (which began 'A. D. 1749) in the village of Deori in the vicinity of that 'place. This inscription was in Sanskrit upon a copper plate 'of about two feet square, and purported to convey, as a free 'religious gift from a sovereign of the Haihayavansi family, the 'village of Deorī in which it was found, to Deodatt, a Brāh-'man, and his heirs for ever.

'Nizām Sā was very anxious to restore the village to 'one of the descendants of this man, but no trace whatever 'could be found of his family. The plate was preserved in 'the palace with the greatest care up to the year 1780 when 'it was lost in the pillage of the place by the Saugor troops, 'and all search for it has since proved fruitless.

'There are, however, several highly respectable men 'still living who often saw it and have a perfectly distinct 'recollection of its contents. How and when the Gonds 'succeeded this family in the sovereignty of Mandlā we are 'never likely to learn; nor would it be very useful to inquire.

'This family of Haihayavansis reigned over Lānji for-'merly called Chumpanuttu,[2] Ratanpur, formerly called 'Moncpore,[3] Mandlā, formerly called Muhikmuttu (Mahishmati), 'and Sumbulpore (Sambalpur). The Garhā-Mandlā dynasty 'boast a Rājput origin, though they are not recognised to be 'genuine.

Jadu Rai.

30. 'Tradition says that Jādu Rai, a soldier of fortune 'from Khāndesh, entered the service of one of the Haihayavansi sovereigns of 'Lānji and accompanied him on a pilgrimage to the source of 'the Nerbudda at Amarkantak. One night while standing sen-'try over the prince's tent he saw three Gonds, two men and

[1] More probably 449 A D
[2] Sk. Champavati (?)
[3] Sk. Manipur (?)

'a woman, pass, followed by a large monkey of the sacred or 'Hanumān tribe; and as they passed the monkey looked in his 'face and dropped some peacock's feathers, which he took up and brought home with him when relieved from his post. On 'falling asleep the goddess Nerbudda (Narmadā) appeared to 'him, and told him that the people he had seen were not, 'as he supposed, Gonds, but the god Rāma, his consort Sītā, 'and his brother Lakshman; that the Hanumān was the 'faithful follower of the god, and the feathers he had 'dropped were to signify that he should one day attain to 'sovereign power. He was at the same time told to visit 'Surbhi Pāthak, a Brāhman recluse, who lived at Ramnagar 'near Bhedāghāt in the vicinity of Garhā and consult with 'him on all occasions of difficulty, as his spiritual guide. 'Immediately after this vision, Jādu Rai quitted the service 'of the Lānji prince and proceeded to the Brāhman recluse 'at Ramnagar, but on entering upon an explanation of his motive for visiting him, was very much surprised to hear 'him say that he was perfectly well acquainted with his 'motive, as the goddess had appeared to him also and in-'formed him of Jadu Rai's great destiny. The Brāhman 'then took him into the middle of the river Nerbudda and 'there made him swear by the sacred stream, that, if he 'ever attained sovereignty, he would appoint the Brāhman 'to the office of prime minister. This being done he recom-'mended Jādu Rai to proceed, and offer his services to the 'Gond Rājā of Garhā and to use every effort to recommend 'himself to his notice and gain esteem

'This Rajā had only one child, a daughter named Rutnā-'bali (Ratnavali) and finding himself declining and without 'the hope of a son, the Rājā consulted his chief officers and 'priests on the choice of a son-in-law and successor to the 'throne. He was recommended to leave the choice with 'God, to ascertain His will it was suggested that he 'should assemble as great a multitude as he could on the 'bank of the river, and in the midst release a blue jay.

'Should the bird alight on the head of any man present, 'he might be assured that he had been chosen by heaven 'to succeed him The suggestion pleased the prince, and 'he immediately put the plan into execution. The bird 'was released by him on the day appointed in the midst 'of an immense concourse of people, and it alighted on 'the head of the young adventurer, who, having some 'scruples of conscience on the ground of the young princess's 'inferiority of caste, was reconciled to the marriage by his 'spiritual guide. Those who wish the descendants to be 'considered pure Rājputs declare that he never cohabited 'with this princess, and that his son by a former wife 'succeeded him in the government, but indifferent people 'believe that he had no other wife, and that his son by 'her was his successor on the throne of the Gond Rājā of 'Garhā. This Rajā died in the year *Samvat* 415 A D.[1] '358, and was succeeded by his son-in-law Jādu Rai.'

Other traditions of Haihayavansi rule

31. It is probable that the old ruins at Rānikothir and the various other remains in the upper Wainganga valley, similarly connected with the names of Alha and Udal and Soni Rani, relate to this Rajput dynasty Captain Thomson (Seoni Settlement Report, paras. 190 and 191) mentions this tradition. An inscription from Ratanpur, dated 1114 A D. (Ep Indica, October 1888, pp. 32 et. seq.) states that the rulers in Lānji (Lāñjikā) and Wairāgarh were tributary to the Rājās of Ratanpur.

In the first edition of the C P. Gazetteer some connection is stated to have existed between the Lānji family and the Rāja of Sīrangarh, but this appears unlikely A carved stone inscription was found at Lānji and is now in existence in the Nagpur Museum. It is too illegible to be deciphered· but Professor von Kielhorn to whom it was submitted has given the following account of it.—'The 'greater part of it is in praise of the god Siva. In line

[1] Probably A.D. 674.

'21, after the sign of punctuation near the commencement 'of the line, there seems to begin the genealogy of some 'Nāyakas, who derived their descent from Sayyāpāla of 'the Yādia lineage, but excepting the name Rāma-nāyaka 'no names appear to be fully preserved. The name Lānji 'I cannot find in the inscription, nor do I see any date. 'Judging from the writing, which is quite ordinary Nāgari, 'the inscription may belong to about the 13th century.' Lānji, Hatta and Kāmtha are said to have been among the districts of the Garhā-Katangi kingdom held by Dhāro Sā Jarrett's Ain-i-Akbari, ed. 1891, Vol. II. p. 200, gives Lānji, Karolā, and Dungarola as three mahāls of the Sarkār of Kanauj, with a revenue of 1,000,000 *dāms*, and inhabited by Gonds.

Fall of the Gonds and beginning of Marāthā rule.

32. The local Gonds still remember some of the names of the old Garhā-Mandlā chiefs, especially that of Hiade Sā, who reigned in *Samvat* 1709. There is a well-known song about his visit to Delhi, the attempt of the Mughal Emperor to exact tribute from him and his escape thence. The simple cunning of the Gond chief and the strong humorous element are characteristic of the legends of this race. After the conquest of Nāgpur by the Marāthās, the fall of Mandlā was not long deferred. The Peshwā Bālājī Bāji Rao had already, in A.D 1742, invaded Mandlā during the reign of Mahārāj Sā, and extorted a tribute of four lakhs of rupees. There were one or two dynastic quarrels, each resulting in an invasion of fresh Marāthā hordes till in A. D. 1781 the Marātha chief of Saugor seized the whole Mandla kingdom. In 1743 A.D. Raghujī Bhonsla seized Seonī, and placed the Katangī Karolā parganas under the rule of Muhammad Khān, (ancestor of the present Dīwān of Seoni) who had already been employed by the Gonds of Deogarh. His great-grandson Zamān Khān proved incompetent and the tract suffered much from the raids of Pindāris. In 1805 Zamān Khān was replaced by Bengāji Bhatonea who governed till 1808, when he

was superseded by Kharak Bhārti, who is said to have rackrented and misgoverned the tract. He held it till its cession to the British in 1818. In 1798 the Saugor Marāthās made over Mandlā to Raghujī Bhonsla for 27 lakhs of rupees. Until 1818 Mandlā was held by various Marāthā *sūbahs* while the Hattā and Lānji tracts were under the *sūbah* of Lanji. Chimnāji Bhonsla, on his expedition to Cuttack, passed by the Lānji-Bijāgarh Ghāt.

British rule.

33. In 1818, the Saugor Nerbudda territories were ceded to the British, including the Karolā and Katangī parganas, all the above ghāt portion of the District lying to the north of the Nahāra and Uskāl rivers, and the Mau taluk. The Dhansuā, Hattā and Lānji tracts with the zamīndāris remained subject to the Nāgpur Rajā. The early part of the 19th century was a period of much progress. The Marāthā proprietor of the Mau and Paraswārā tāluks introduced a large number of Ponwār settlers. Kāmtha and its under-zamīndāris of Hattā, Kunāpur, Bahela and others which had been waste land, were rapidly settled by a Kunbī family the most prominent member of which was Chimnā Patel. At the revolt of Appajī, Chimnā loyally adhered to those whom he considered the rightful rulers: he seized the *kamaishdār* of Lānji and caused the fort to be surrendered to his interest.

Lānji revolt.

34. The following description of the rise and suppression of the Lānji rebellion is quoted in Mr. Lawrence's Bhandāra Settlement Report from Sir Richard Jenkins' despatch and from Colonel Valentine Blacker's memoirs:—'The insurrection in the Lānji 'and neighbouring Districts to the eastward of Nāgpur, was 'only inferior in consequence to that in the Mahādeo hills, 'from the latter being the position chosen by Appa Sāhib 'himself for his rallying point. In respect of resources and in-'fluence Chimnā Patel, who was at the head of this insurrec-'tion, was of superior consequence to any of Appa Sāhib's

'partisans. He possessed a fertile territory of considerable 'extent, out of which he only paid a moderate quit-rent to 'the Government; he had consequently amassed consider-'able treasure, besides having the reputation of possessing 'more left to him by his father Gondū Patel, from whom the 'former rājās could never extort it. The whole of the 'neighbouring districts from the Waingangā to the Lānji 'hills east, an average of about 50 miles, and from Katangī, 'the southern pargana of the Seonī-Chhapāra District, to 'Partābgarh south, a length of about 80 miles, were possessed 'by a number of petty zamīndārs, accustomed to consider 'him as their chief, and who were united in his cause 'by that habit, as well as the incitement of Appa Sāhib's 'numerous agents. These districts were, besides, the resi-'dence of numerous families of the military class, particularly 'Musalmāns and Rājputs, who had retired to their homes 'on the dissolution of the Rājā's army, but were ready to 'embrace the cause of any adventurer who promised them 'bread. He was attached to Appa Sahib from a sense of 'gratitude for having been released by him from confine-'ment at his accession to the regency, and from late favours 'accompanied by marks of confidence which proved how 'much Appa Sahib relied upon him, and which naturally 'disposed him to fidelity. Still, however, until the moment 'he broke out, his conduct showed little to lead to any sus-'picion against him, and his general character for prudence 'and quiet demeanour, his continued professions of obe-'dience, the general tranquility of the districts and the good 'opinion of him entertained by Narain Pandit and other res-'pectable people in Nāgpur, induced me to hope that the 'intelligence I received from time to time of his inimical 'intentions, might be incorrect. At the same moment, how-'ever, that the arrival of the Arabs and other troops to the 'assistance of Appa Sāhib, obliged us to look particularly to 'that quarter, we had a call from Lānji for troops, which we 'were at that moment very ill able to supply The disturb-

'ances commenced by an attack on the *kamaishdār* of Lānji 'and a party of *sebundies*, with whom he was making a tour 'of the District. His person was seized, and his party either 'destroyed or dispersed. I immediately sent out the only 'detachment we had the means of forming, composed of 'about 800 Auxiliary Horse, principally Marāthās, 300 of 'the Nāgpur Brigade, with a Jemadār's party of the 6th 'Cavalry, under Captain William Gordon. Having the 'Kanhān and Waingangā rivers to cross, which are both 'unfordable, and, particularly the latter, wide and rapid during 'the rains, when the whole country becomes almost a swamp, 'his progress was necessarily slow. The enemy attempted 'to oppose him on the Waingangā, and had seized all the boats 'on that river, which, however, were replaced from those on 'the Kanhān, which runs into it, and on seeing the boats 'arrive, covered by the fire of small pieces of artillery, which 'had been provided from the neighbouring *garhīs*, they re- 'treated, and the river was passed, with considerable difficulty 'and delay from inefficient means, but no opposition.'

Capture of Kāntha.[1]

35. 'The enemy were at the time in possession of the fort of Kāmtha from whence they over-ran all the neighbouring country. 'Captain Gordon, who was on the march to occupy that 'place and Lānji, found a body of 400 men, Musalmāns, 'Gosains, and Marāthās, drawn up to oppose him, behind 'a deep nullah near the village of Nowargaon. He accord- ingly left his treasure and provisions under the protection 'of twenty-five regulars, all his matchlocks and his gun. 'With the remainder, consisting of twenty-five of the 6th 'Bengal Cavalry, two hundred and twenty-five regular in- 'fantry (of which two hundred were of the newly raised 'Nāgpur Brigade) and six hundred irregular horse, he ad- 'vanced against the enemy. who had good cover in the 'ravines connected with the bed of the nullah They fired 'at each other for about a quarter of an hour, after which

[1] Col Blacker

'the horse, in two portions, plunged into the stream, and 'gained the enemy's rear. The infantry, in the meantime, 'forded in front, carrying their cartridge boxes and muskets 'on their heads, to save them from the water. About one 'hundred of the enemy were killed, and some prisoners were 'taken. From them it was ascertained that they were 'strangers, who had been engaged for the service of Appa 'Sāhib by his agent in the city of Nāgpur. This success 'was obtained with the loss of no more than four sepoys. 'Captain Gordon's progress towards Kāmtha continued to be 'so much impeded by the weather, that he was unable to 'arrive there before the middle of September. He was then 'reinforced by two companies of the 1st Battalion of the 1st 'Native Infantry under Lieutenant Thuillier, sent from Nāg-'pur to overtake him. As in the meanwhile the enemy had 'extended a chain of posts from Ambāgarh to Chāndpur, 'Rāmpailī and Sāngarhī, a second detachment was sent 'out under Major Wilson on the 17th. His instructions 'were to attack and dislodge all the enemy's parties along 'his route, to the most distant point of their line. Captain 'Gordon proceeded to the attack of Kāmtha, before the arrival 'of the detachment, and his dispositions for this purpose were 'carried into execution at day-break of the 18th The town 'of Kāmtha is surrounded by a wall and partial ditch, and 'contains a small *garhī*, like most other Marāthā towns. To 'attack the town in the first instance, the force was divided 'into three parties, of which the left, under Lieutenant 'Thuillier, was composed of one hundred and sixty Madras 'Native Infantry, and two hundred of the Nāgpur Brigade 'The central party consisted of a company of the same 'brigade, with a gun, and the right of matchlock-men, under 'a native chief named Anandrao The left column was 'provided with fascines, carried by every second man, and as 'they approached the ditch of the town, which was very con-'temptible, these were precipitated into it, and the troops 'passed over without difficulty After entering the *pettah*, they

'separated into two parties. One of these took the right 'and the other the left, and drove the enemy before them 'with much gallantry and some loss, while the fugitives, who 'took to the plain, were intercepted by the regular horse, 'from whom they suffered considerable injury. The enemy 'had two batteries in the town, one of which was opposed to 'the central party, and the other to that on the right. Both 'these were stormed, as soon as the left column got into the 'town. The *garhī* alone now remained to be reduced and a 'gun was brought up to the gate to blow it open, but this 'failing, an elephant took its place, and forced open the centre 'barrier. There was still, however, another gate, but while 'the assailants were devising the means of forcing that like-'wise the garrison surrendered, on the promise of personal 'safety. This was a very important success, as the *killedār* 'had much influence over several of the remaining garrisons 'of this quarter, whose submission he immediately promised 'The number stated to have been in the town is probably 'over-estimated at two thousand men, of whom the loss was 'estimated at four hundred. The number of British troops 'killed and wounded amounted to sixty-one.

'The brilliant success of Captain Gordon at Kāmtha 'crowned as it was with the capture of Chimnā Patel, the 'prime mover of the insurrection in that quarter, completely 'changed the face of affairs, and left little to do but to receive 'the submission of the rest of the zamīndārs to the eastward 'of the Waingangā. The judicious and spirited enterprise of 'Major Wilson, only two days after the assault of Kamtha, 'recovered the strong fort of Ambagarh, which also cleared 'the country between the rivers. The forts of Lānji and 'Hattā quietly surrendered to Captain Gordon, together with 'the persons who treacherously gave up the former place, and 'notwithstanding the attempts of Chimnā's Diwan, Sakhārām 'Pant, who escaped from Kamtha, to keep the insurrection 'alive, everything immediately assumed a tranquil aspect, and 'this person was shortly secured. Chimnā Patel was confined

'for months in his own fort of Kāmtha and for a further two 'years was a prisoner on parole at his villages of Nowagaon 'and Jhilmili; at the expiration of that period he acquired from 'Captain Wilkinson the zamīndāri of Kirnāpur, which was 'then held *khālsa* (direct from Government) but had at times 'been under the sway of the Kunbī zamindārs of Kāmtha'.

Constitution of Bhandāra and Seonī Districts.

36. The British Government, influenced by Chimnā Patel's loyalty to his lawful chief and by his merit and good conduct made over to him the Kirnāpur zamīndāri in 1828. Until 1830, the part of the District ruled from Nāgpur was managed as part of the Waingangā District by a British officer during the minority of the Rājā. The Nāgpur kingdom lapsed in 1854, and the Bhandāra District was constituted, the first Deputy Commissioner to hold charge of it being Captain Elliott. Its administration continued unchanged till the District of Bālāghāt was constituted. The rest of the area at present included in the Bālāghāt District was from 1818 till 1835 part of the Seonī District, of which Mandlā was treated as a tahsīl or subdivision. The Districts of the Saugor Nerbudda territories were reconstituted in 1835. In 1851 Mandlā was made a separate District. The Mutiny seems to have passed by these portions of Seonī and Mandlā and left them entirely undisturbed. In 1862 the Mau and Raigarh-Bichhia tracts were transferred to Seonī.

Formation of Bālāghāt District.

37. When reporting his proposals for the settlement of the Raigarh-Bichhia tract, Captain Thomson gave a description of the possibilities of the tract now known as the Baihar tahsīl on which the then Chief Commissioner, Sir R. Temple, decided to constitute as an experimental measure a District, comprising the Raigarh-Bichhia tract, and including the tālukas of Bhimlat, Paraswāra and Toplā, the Lānji pargana and its zamīndāris, and the Dhansua and Hattā parganas. On the west the boundary was to be the Wainganga and the Bāgh rivers. The northern boundary was to

be settled by the Deputy Commissioners of Mandlā and Balāghāt jointly. This boundary was fixed by Captains Ward and Loch much as it stands at present. Sir R. Temple's object in establishing the District was the colonisation and proper exploitation of the fertile uplands. Hitherto, save in the Paraswāra plateau, the only cultivation was of kodon and light rice by Gonds and Baigās: while valuable timber was being destroyed, and minor forest produce either wasted or removed without profit to Government. It was hoped that the injury to the forest might be checked by proper supervision, and that by the construction of convenient approaches to the plateau and the offer of advantageous leases, settlers might be induced to migrate from the lowlands, for which purpose the plain tract at the foot of the ghāt was added to the District, it being thought necessary to place under the control of the local authorities the tracts whence emigrants might be induced to settle in Baihar The temporary establishment of the District was, in 1867, sanctioned by the Secretary of State. In accordance with the order that some convenient spot in the plains near Hatta but outside zamindāri limits was to be chosen as the headquarters, the village of Būrha was fixed on and a wattle and daub building for the District office, containing also dwelling rooms for the Deputy Commissioner and District Superintendent of Police, was hastily run up. The Deputy Commissioner was to reside in Būrha in the rains and tour above the ghāts in the open season. He was to be assisted by a tahsīldār and naib, and also to have the help of a forest *darogā*, and an Inspector for the Police Department. In 1871 the sanction of the Secretary of State was received to the permanent constitution of the Balāghāt District. About the same time Colonel Bloomfield, as Deputy Commissioner, pointed out that it was a great obstacle to colonisation that Katangī and Karolā, the principal source whence intending settlers for Baihar were likely to be drawn, should be under a different authority than that responsible for the colonisation of the Baihar tract. It had apparent-

ly been the intention of the Chief Commissioner in 1871 to attach these areas to the Bālāghāt District, for the same reason, but, owing to some misunderstanding, this was not done. From 1873, however, the Katangī and Karolā parganas were added to the Būrha tahsīl, the Katangī tahsīl of Seonī abolished, and its villages to the west of Lingāpaonār added to the Seonī tahsil. Twenty-four of the Katangī villages, at this time transferred to Bālāghāt, had originally formed part of the Bhandāra District. The District court house was built in 1875 and also the jail. Prior to that, prisoners had been sent to Bhandara, and a lock-up had been maintained at Bālāghat for undertrials and short-term prisoners. The *Moti talāo* and its avenues of bamboos, which with the majestic background of the Sātpurā hills form the chief beauty of the headquarters station, are all due to the energy and resource of Captain Bloomfield; and, had his plans been adhered to, Bālāghāt would have yielded in picturesqueness to no station in the Central Provinces

Captain Bloomfield set about the work of colonisation and improvement of the Baihar plateau with great energy. The Ahmadpur and Bhandāra ghāts had been to some extent improved by Lakshman Naik, talukdar of Mau, under native rule they were still further improved, and the Pancherā Wari, and Bhānpur ghāts were constructed. The indiscriminate *bewar* cultivation of the Baigās was checked, and an attempt was made to induce them to take to civilised methods of cultivation. Ponwārs and other good cultivating castes were induced to settle under favourable terms.

Early efforts at colonisation.

38. A short account by Colonel Bloomfield of the difficulties experienced and the methods employed in the colonisation of the uplands follows:—'The object was to induce the good cultivating classes from the plains 'below to take up and bring under proper rice cultivation 'the large tracts of good land on the plateau, which 'Colonel Thompson, Deputy Commissioner and Settle-

'ment Officer of Mandlā, had declared and reserved as 'Government waste. These were uninhabited except by 'a few Gonds in hamlets (*tolās*) of small huts scattered and 'far apart. In the more inaccessible stony hills the Baigās 'carried on the *bewar* cultivation to their heart's content. 'The two northern parganas of the Bhandāra District were 'added to supply emigrants, such as Ponwars, Kunbīs, 'Kurmīs, and other good cultivating classes. The great 'difficulty at first was the absolute inaccessibility of the 'plateau to anything like a wheeled vehicle. Not only were 'there no roads up the hills but there was nothing of the 'kind above the hills. So that when an unusually enterpris-'ing man from the plains took his cart to pieces and carried 'it up, part at a time, on his head, he could make but little 'use of it. Colonel Newmarch, Deputy Commissioner of 'Bhandāra, reporting in 1865-66 on the approaches from the 'south, said that the paths up the hills were fit for only 'Gonds or monkeys.

'Colonel Thompson (Deputy Commissioner, Mandlā) had 'prior to 1866 slightly improved the paths from the north 'into the Paraswara tāluk and from the upper Waingangā 'valley at Mau towards Ahmadpur, and a rough track from 'Paraswara to Baihar, and had induced 4 or 5 old Ponwars to 'try their hands above the hills. All they took up went on 'men's heads and bullocks' backs.

'The simple instructions to the Deputy Commissioner, 'Bālāghāt, were:—

(I) 'Induce good cultivators from below to take up vil-'lages above, and (II) Make passes up the hills as well as 'possible with the money granted for the purpose. At first 'the applicants for lands were very difficult to get. Those 'who did come after much persuasion were either land grab-'bers who hoped to be given the proprietary rights in huge[1] 'areas or men who had got into tight places with their māl-'guzārs and zamīndārs and wished to make a fresh start.

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[1] The *mauzās* were huge in area and with very uncertain boundaries.

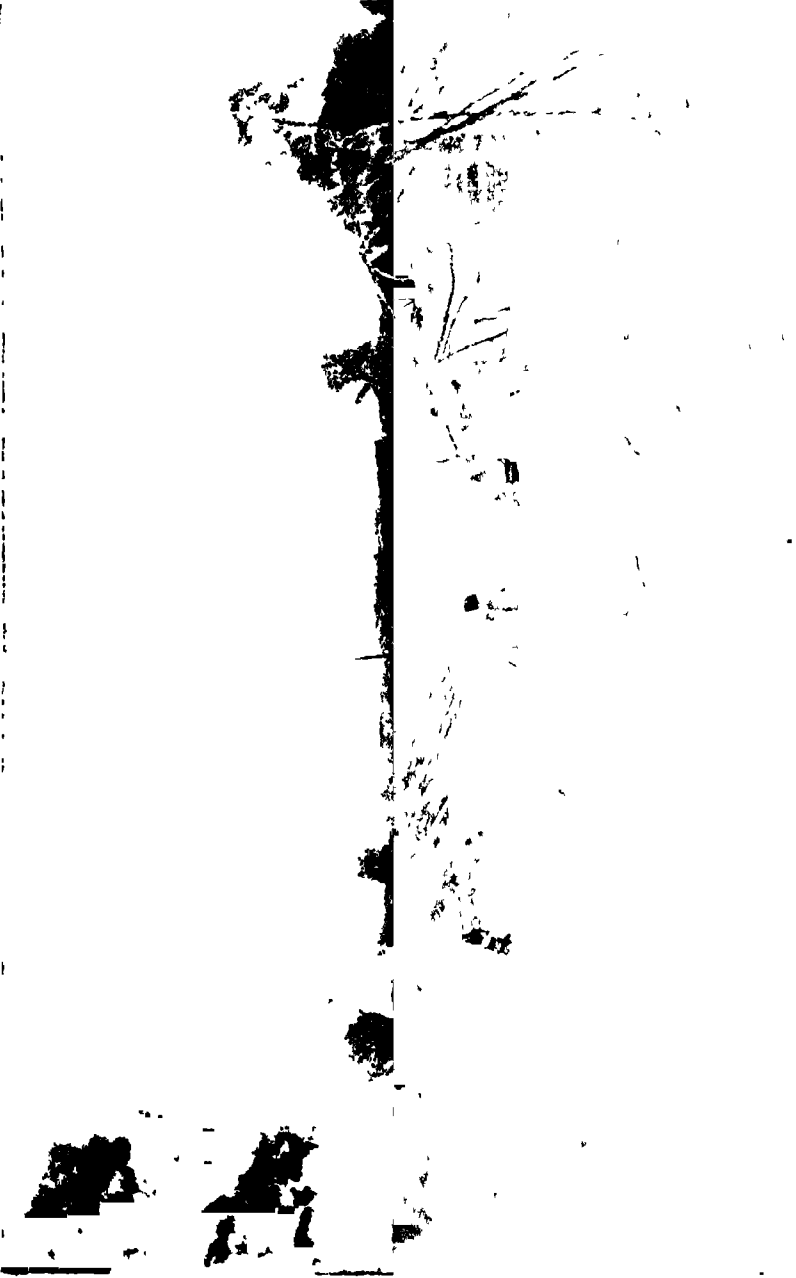



Photo Stemm.  Roorkee College

BAIGA VILLAGE, BHIMLAT.

'Dewā Patel who took up a village north-west of Baihar was 'a good example of a satisfactory and successful settler

'But to neither were any rights given, although Colonel 'Loch did promise proprietary rights under certain conditions 'to come.

'I gave them clearly to understand that idle hands were 'not wanted, but (*ijāzatnāmas*) permissions to cultivate were 'given on the distinct understanding that they would be 'cancelled unless I found sufficient progress was made in 'erecting proper substantial rice *bandhīs*, earth works, or 'small irrigation tanks

'The Gond squatters were also given clearly to under'stand that they would not be allowed to monopolise good 'land for their kodon-kutki and *chīkhal pahār*[1] cultivation, but that tanks and proper *bandhīs* alone would secure their 'tenure of the Government land. Bhois took to the work 'with a will and vied with the Ponwārs in making tanks and 'really good *bandhīs*; others, however, looked upon the emi'grants with very jealous eyes and encouraged the lower 'classes of Gonds to steal their cattle and drive them away 'into the inaccessible places in the hills of Sāletekrī and 'Bhanpur. Some of the zamindārs were only too glad to 'take them off their hands and in due time dispose of them 'in the far away bazars in Lanji, Hattā and Kāmtha. This 'was one of the great difficulties with which the emigrants 'had to contend, but I stopped it by settling influential Gond 'Bhois in selected localities and making them responsible for 'the good behaviour of their caste fellows Another of their 'difficulties was the absence of roads.' * * *

Road making under difficulties.

39. 'The next ghāt undertaken was that from Odhā. 'Up this I had to lead my horse, the 'ledges on which I passed being too 'narrow for any mounted man. Very 'little money was allowed for this, and great difficulties were

[1] *Chīkhal pahār* were small ridges only a few inches high made by scratching up the mud.

'experienced in the way of huge boulders of rock across the 'only practicable line. Blasting was too expensive and the 'only remedy was to undermine and send them thundering 'into the valley below. In this way a fairly good pass was 'extemporised, steep but more used by carts than any of 'those from the south. In making all the ghāts the fact was 'borne in mind that most carts going up were empty and 'those coming down were full and therefore steep places 'were no great hindrance to the traffic.

'Without these passes the produce from above could 'not have reached the markets in the plains, for although 'Banjārās frequently passed from east to west *via* Ragholī to 'Mandlā and Jubbulpore and from the Raipur direction to 'the then great mart of Tumsar, yet between those lines none 'were ever seen

Struggles of early colonists

40 'In these days the battle between the wild beasts 'and the human inhabitants was far 'from being decided, for occasionally 'villages were completely laid waste 'and devastated by the tigers and panthers and in many no 'man or beast could after nightfall leave the village *abādi* 'without risking his life.

'Malarial fever was a terrible scourge among all except 'Gonds and Baigās. The new settlers especially suffered and 'hardly a Government official, tahsīl or police, escaped. 'Any official sent up from the lower tahsīl was generally 'down with it within a few days of his transfer It was 'pitiful to see many adults and children with spleens that 'quite disfigured them. Everything possible was done to 'mitigate the evil. Not only was the upper dispensary kept 'well supplied with quinine but it was distributed broadcast, 'and a travelling native doctor was appointed to visit the 'villages and hunt out and treat the sick. It was almost 'childish to suppose that such people would or could come 'any distance to the dispensary and therefore medical aid 'was sent to their doors.

'In some cases malarious villages with good land were 'taken up by 2 or 3 families in succession, only a few months 'sufficing for the malaria to clear away each whole family.

'Not only were men and their animals killed by tigers 'and panthers but the wild dogs were sometimes very 'troublesome. In the new villages settled in the north 'near the Banjar reserve they have been known to rush 'out and attack the grazing cattle and disembowel some 'of them, as they fled, before the herdsman could intervene. 'Good fire-arms were procured from Nagpur and freely 'lent to men who could be relied on to make good use of 'them, and became their property when by killing dangerous 'animals they had earned them. The applications for *sarkāri* '*bandūks* were very numerous, but it would have done more 'harm than good to have let any one have them; tigers, etc., 'would have been frightened and made wary instead of being 'killed, night shooting by *andēz* being only too common. 'The Government rewards were always paid and these were 'so high that poor natives could be excused for firing by 'guess at an unseen animal with the hope of getting 'sufficient to live on for a whole year. The devices in the 'wilder parts for frightening wild animals from the crops 'were numerous and ingenious. Deer and such like they 'could keep off, but the wild pig often cared for nothing. 'Amusing accounts were sometimes given me of how the 'arrival of a panther would quickly clear the fields and cause 'a fine stampede of the sounders of pigs, that had defied 'all the shoutings and rattlings of the watchers.

'Ryotwāri settlement was suggested to me. But it was 'not practicable. The cultivators who settled in these wild 'tracts were generally poor, with often nothing but a pair or 'two of bullocks. Such men could not stand alone, so that 'each village required some sort of headman, on whom they 'could rely for seed-grain and other assistance in time of need.

'My would-be patels generally did this and those villages 'increased and prospered most, whose patels were kind and

'considerate to those who settled with them. At first many 'such patels were heavy losers by Gonds and other unreliables 'who promised to settle, make *bandhīs*, and cultivate properly, 'but after staying a year or two and getting well into the 'patel's debt for seed-grain, etc., disappeared in the night, 'leaving no trace behind. Experience only could help them 'in this matter. They were at first slow to realize that every 'one receiving seed-grain must first work hard and erect good 'substantial *bandhīs*. I made no particular rules but every 'year from February to June marched about the upper tahsil 'and saw for myself what work was being done. My rule was '"Good work, every encouragement, no *mali*, no peace."

'The Baigās always said "We don't clear the land and 'destroy the jungle Where we cut, it grows again. But 'where the Gonds cut, there they come and plough. That 'destroys the jungle" This was quite true, for where the 'Baigās cut, the growth on the *shuldum* or old *bewar* cutting 'was often almost impenetrable, though a favourite resort 'for the old solitary bull bisons and the pairs of males called '"kāka bahnaja".'

41. Other important landmarks in the history of the District are the coming of the Chhattisgarh State railroad to Tumsar in 1879-1880, and to Amgaon in 1880-81: and the completion of the Gondia-Bālāghāt road in 1883.

Subsequent history of District.

The two famines gave a great impetus to the construction of roads, and the District is now probably better supplied with roads than any in the Central Provinces The opening of the long-expected Sātpurā railway through the District in 1903, and its continuation to Jubbulpore in 1905, were additions to the communications the full value and effect of which have not yet been felt.

In 1904 the boundaries of the Baihar tahsīl were greatly changed, by the transfer to Baihar of the above ghāt portions of the zamīndāris and the Dhansuā pargana, thus making the ghāt line the tahsīl boundary, a change which had been sug-

gested when the District was first constituted, and had become of obvious desirability, since, the zamīndāris having largely lost their special character owing to numerous transfers and partitions, the objection to dividing them up had no longer its original force. At the same time a small block of villages, 15 square miles in area, separated from the rest of Raigarh by Government forest, was handed over to the Mandla District.

### ARCHÆOLOGY.

Archæological remains.

42. About a mile to the north of Baihar village are three old temples in good preservation but of no particular architectural merit. This village also contains two images named Sihārpath and Singhbāgh. They are representations of lions holding elephants under their paws, and are the objects of popular worship. There are several old tanks with remains of stone steps near the temples. Some 15 miles north-west of Baihar near the village of Dhupur, is a temple called 'Jogi Madhi', said to be a Buddhist ruin. One and a half miles south of Baihar at Mohbhattā is a 'Madhī' supported on four monolith pillars. Near it is a granite image.

At the Bhaisānghāt, a mountain pass some 13 miles north of Baihar, is an image of Bhaisānpath Deo. Thirteen miles east of Baihar on the Banjar river, near the village of Bhīmlāt, is a curious stone pillar or *lāt*, 9 feet long by 2½ feet thick, lying on the ground in a grove of mango trees which is said to be the *lāt* of Bhīma. It is cut from a peculiarly fine-grained stone, which seems to have been brought from a distance. At a short distance from this, in the water at the junction of the Jamunia and Banjar rivers, is a large stone mortar of which the pillar is supposed to be the pestle. The former object has given the name Bhīmlāt to the village. There are, as is usual with these *lāts*, several legends to account for it. A fair is held here on Kārtik Sudi 15th.

At Ramgarhi, in east Bhimlāt, are images of Krishna and Mahādeo. There is also a stone image on the river Banjar where a fair is held for three days in Kārtik.

At Bhīri are two plain and one carved Hemādpanthī temple, and another in ruins. There is a tank near them. They are all in a more or less dilapidated condition and now contain no images. An image from one of them was sent in 1853 or 1854 by the Seonī District authorities to the Central Museum at Nāgpur. There are a few fragments left from which it appears that they are of Jain origin. Four miles south of Bhīri at Katalbori, there is a stone 2½ feet by 2 feet, on which are two images resembling warriors Six miles north-west of Bhīri in the Government forest is the cave of Sāwarjhori, where the stream of that name rises. It contains an image of Mahādeo. There are also images of Ganpati, Vishnu and Pārvatī All these images are quite modern. The tradition is that Mahādeo goes to meet Narsingha on the Narsingha hill near Lamta.

There is a *satī* memorial at Themā, a village in the Paraswāra tract, which is supposed to grow every year. At Raīgarh Bendī on the north-east border of Raigarh there is an old temple and tank, now quite overgrown with forest

Mau village was the residence of the Marāthā family who colonised the Mau and Paraswāra tract. But there are numerous remains there of a much older date One mile east of the village is a *chabūtra* 8 feet square and the same in height of granite, on which is an image of a *nāg* and a pillar. The *chabutra* is situated in the middle of a tank and is called the *Nāg chabūtra.* There is also a temple with the remains of a flight of steps. On the north of it are two images, one of Ganpati, the other a *pindī* of Mahādeo. The temple is said to have been built in the time of one Nanjedār, but who he was is not known. Two miles east of Mau is a rock some 300 feet high, on which are some stone remains called the *nagārkhāna* or drum-house, said to have been constructed in the time of Alhā and Udal when their marriage with Sonā Rānī of Kuāgarh was celebrated. These mythical personages with their bride, Sonā Rānī, are the heroes of Bundelkhand tradition. Alhā was a Banāphar Rājput, and Udal was his

brother. They served Parmā, Rājā of Mahobā, a Parihār, and took part in the great battle between Prithwi Rāj, King of Delhi, and Parmā, which is supposed to have taken place in the Orai District. The marriage of Alhā to Sonvatī, daughter of Rājā Indarman of Naināgarh, and the battle of Rūdal or Udal with Indarman on behalf of his brother are the subject of a famous Bundelkhandī folk song. It would seem probable that the various tribes who moved southward from Bundelkhand through the Nerbudda valley into the Sātpurā uplands brought with them this tradition and applied it to the relics of an earlier civilisation which they found on their arrival. These relics in reality may well have been those of the Rājput princes of Tewar or Lānji

Eight miles north of Mau at Sonkhār are the remains of a very old fortress containing 53 images of stone, called Sāda Bhāda; one of them is the image of a rider with an umbrella over his head and a palanquin before him in which is the figure of a female A third image is standing with a sword and shield in its hand. It is of a yellow stone, and is called 'Bhandia Sādi' The remaining figures are not remarkable. The Gonds say that when their ancestors ruled the country and Sada Bhāda was Rājā, his marriage procession was passing by that way and all the people in the procession with Sada Bhada were transformed into these images of stone.

Four miles north of Charegaon in the Mau tāluk is the shrine of Narsingha, a small but very old temple, which stands on a smooth conical hill of gneiss.

At Dhansua is an old temple now in a dilapidated condition It is said to be of Buddhist architecture. It contains no carved image, but a stone called Gosain Deo which is worshipped by the villagers Numerous other temples here and at Pūrha are said to have been destroyed by the old Muhammadan zamīndars of Dhansua.

An old earth fort exists at Garh in Raigarh, which gives its name to the village. It is said by the patel of the village to have been built by his ancestors, the talukdārs of Sihora.

Hattā, a village about 12 miles south-east of Bālāghāt town, contains an interesting remain in the shape of a fine *baolī*, situated on the site of an old fort which is used by the zamindār as his residence The fort was added to and strengthened by Chimnā Patel, but is of much older origin and is said by local tradition to have been built by a Gond.

Four miles from Bisāpur, a village near Katangi, in the Government forest there is a cave which contains an image of Mahādeo. There is a well, and an annual fair is held at the Shivrātri. There are several old temples in and round Kirnāpur village of no special interest Two miles north-west of Kirnāpur at Pala is a temple called 'Brahmachāri' partly plain and partly sculptured, 8 feet long by 5 feet broad, and 19 feet high Near Kuāgarh in North Karolā are some interesting remains One building is said to be the *kacheri* of the mythical rulers Alhā and Udal It is built of black stone. To its north are the remains of one large and another smaller gate.

On a neighbouring hill is a triangular stone called the bed of Sonā Rāni, wife of Alha or Udal.

Lānji, the seat of an old Rājput dynasty, contains several memorials of their rule There is a fort surrounded by a moat which is now entirely out of repair. It was held by Chimnā Patel's followers against the British and was before that the seat of a Marāthā *kamaishdār* Local tradition asserts it to have been the work of the Gonds in the 18th century, but it is probably much older In the bamboo jungle, a mile to the north-east of the town, at a place called Kāsitolā, is an old tmple dedicated to Mahādeo, surrounded by what are said to be the remains of the original town. This is much resorted to at the Shivrātri festival. Within the fort there is an old temple dedicated to the goddess Mahā Māi. There are several tanks of which one, called the Rājā-Rānī tank, is partly paved with stone. There is also a temple dedicated to Kālī, said to have been built by Rākhad Bābā.

Photo Etching

Roorkee College.

OLD TEMPLES AT LANJI.

In the time of Colonel Bloomfield old men still remembered the human sacrifices performed in the Lānji temples and the cruelty and oppression practised to obtain victims.

The sacrificial temple contains carved stones which belong to far more ancient buildings, probably erected by the Rajputs, whose milder ritual was replaced in later years by the bloody ceremonies of the Gonds Some of the carvings are believed to refer to Buddhist times.

Eighteen miles west of Bālāghāt town at Ramramā is a *sthāna* of Mahādeo, 150 by 200 feet, built of plain black stone. To the north of Ramramā on the bank of a nullah in Government forest, there is a cave which contains an image of Mahādeo Near it is a cistern (*kund*) where people bathe and an annual fair is held at the Shivrātri festival. At Säkra is an image of Gāgji Rājā, with two reservoirs which are now filled with earth and the ruins of a temple. Most of the prominent hill ranges, such as the Bhaisānghāt and the Dhansuā hills, contain the remains of rude stone forts, probably of late Gondi times; the most important one is on a steep hill above Kanāri in the Mau tract. The tradition is that the wild tribes who plundered the more peaceful dwellers in the plains resorted to these fastnesses

Treasure trove

43. Various finds of treasure trove of more or less value have been made in the District. In 1903 a number of gold and silver coins, of which only a few were recovered, were found in Hattā. They proved to be coins of the Bahmani dynasty dated A. D. 800 and onwards, and of Muhammad Tughlak. In 1893, 92 coins were discovered near Dhāpewāra in the Bālāghāt tahsīl, but there is nothing to show the era to which they belonged A quantity of copper coins found near Pāndiwāra in 1886, dated from the Malwā kings of the 16th century and from Mahmūd I Khiljī. A noteworthy find of ancient copper and silver implements was made at Ghangaria near Mau in 1870. There are no remains of any buildings

at Ghangaria itself, though there are ancient remains a few miles away at Mau. The find consisted of 424 pieces of copper and 102 pieces of silver. The articles were all in the form of various kinds of axes, chisels, awls, rings, etc., resembling the prehistoric bronze implements found in other parts of the world. Among them were several silver plates, shaped like the forehead of an ox, with horns curving downwards from the upper corners, about 4 or 5 inches across. These were thought at first to be ornaments that are attached to the foreheads of dedicated bulls; but Sir A. Cunningham considered that as this custom was peculiar to Aryan races it was improbable that these articles which were from an aboriginal tract were intended for such a use, and thought that they were simply forehead ornaments. This deduction seems a very doubtful one.

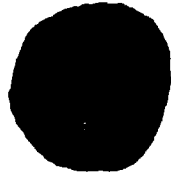
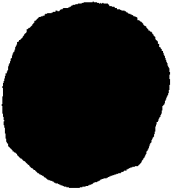
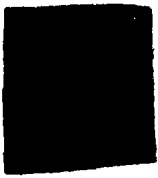
Coins in the Nāgpur Museum.

44. The following note by Pandit Hīrānand of the Archæological Survey describes the coins from the Bālāghāt District to be found in the Nāgpur Museum.

'The coins from the Bālāghāt District, preserved in 'the Central Museum, Nāgpur, are one hundred and five in 'number, forty-seven being of silver and fifty-eight of copper 'or some alloy. Of the former, thirty are of Hindu dynasties, 'of which twenty represent the earliest native coinage and, 'owing to the symbols they bear, are usually called Punch 'marked coins. Their shape is approximately oblong, such 'primitive coins being little more than metal weights on 'which is stamped from time to time the symbol of the 'authority responsible for their correctness and purity.

'This coinage seems to have been developed independ-'ently of any extraneous influence. The basis of the system 'is the *rati* (a [illegible]

'it fo[illegible]

'[illegible]

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'age, but in other parts of India this continued for several 'centuries longer.

'The remaining ten coins belong to one of the three 'classes of coins found in great numbers from the Satlej east-'ward as far as Benāres and from the Himālaya southward 'to the Nerbudda river (Cunningham, Coins of Mediæval India, p. 47), which have not as yet been very definitely 'assigned. These are thick pieces of silver derived from the 'Sassanian type, but so degraded in execution as to show 'little similarity to their originals. They are commonly 'called "Gadbiyā Paisā". According to Cunningham (ibid) 'they are found in south-west Rājputāna, in Mewār, Mālwā 'and Gujarāt.[2]

'The last seventeen are Muhammadan. Of these two 'are of Akbar, two of Jahāngīr, five of Shāh Jahān, six of 'Aurangzeb, one of Fīroz Shāh, the Bahmani King (1397-1422 'A. D.) and one of Muhammad Shāh (Alāuddīn) 1295-1315 'A D.[3]

'Of the copper coins six are Graeco-Bactrian and thirty 'Muhammadan. The remaining twenty-two which are more 'or less square in form and have the impress of an elephant 'on one side—except in a few cases where perhaps it is not 'distinct enough—are ancient Hindu coins of India. They 'belong to the Pāndya dynasty which ruled over the south 'of India. After the Punch marked coinage, the most an-'cient Pāndyan coins seem to be those, which, while retain-'ing the original square form, bear as a die-struck type an ele-'phant on one side only; and somewhat later, those which 'have types on both sides.

'These coins have been assigned to a period ending 'C. 300 A. D.[4]

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[1] Rapson Indian Coins, pages 2, 3

[2] Rapson, *ibid*, page 34.

[3] C. Rodgers' Catalogue of the Coins of Indian Museums, Part I, pages 113 and 47.

[4] Rapson Indian Coins, page 35

'Of the Graeco-Bactrian coins, I have been able to 'identify, with positive certainty, one only. It is of Menan-'der, the Indo-Greek King (about 155 B. C.[1])

'The other two bear on the obverse a helmeted head of 'a king and inscriptions in a fair state of preservation. The 'legends on the remaining three are almost obliterated. One, 'which is the biggest of all, has a sitting male figure with a 'reversed trident to the left.

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[1] See V. Smith, the Early History of India, page 176.

# CHAPTER III.

# POPULATION.

## STATISTICS OF POPULATION.

Statistics of population.

45. The population of the Bālāghāt District in 1901 was 325,371, of which 157,159 were males and 168,212 were females. The population in 1891 was 382,240. but in the year 1904 a strip of forest, containing 5 square miles, was transferred from Mandlā to Bālāghāt, and an area of 15 square miles containing 11 villages from Bālāghāt to Mandlā. The figures of 1901 as above given allow for these transfers, while the figures for 1891 do not. The causes of the decline were of course the famines and failures of crops from 1804 onwards. The death-rate per mille in 1896 was 50·62, in 1897, 95·40 and in 1900, 41·25, against a normal rate varying from 21 to 33 per mille. Besides this, emigration to Berār was no doubt considerable, and it was at the precise time of year when there are most absentees from the District that the census was taken. The number of Central Provinces immigrants found in Berār in 1901 was 207,980; and the Bālāghāt District is an important contributor to this total. The emigration from this District to Assam within the decennial period is stated to have reached the figure of 10,900. The result on the cultivation of the District has been somewhat serious. The number of cropped acres per head was in 1891 only just 1·00, in 1901 it had risen to 1·19. This is the very lowest figure in the Central Provinces, and is a testimony to the intensity and care of the rice cultivation. This great decrease of population fell mostly on the poorest classes, *viz.*, the agricultural and casual labourers. The lack of labour was not so noticeable while the cropped area was at its lowest ebb between 1896 and 1901; but

when agricultural recovery was accompanied by heavy demands for labour on railway, road, and tank construction, and mining and forest operations, while a succession of excellent cotton harvests in Berār tempted emigrants by continually rising wages, the lack of labour was severely felt, and it is cold consolation to tell agricultural employers that they must wait until these prosperous conditions have their effect in increasing the number of labourers, some 15 or 20 years hence, by the rising birth-rate. The fall in registered emigration to Assam has been very marked, and it is the exception to find any would-be emigrant who is not either related to the recruiting *sardār*, or else led by strong personal reasons to wish to leave the District.

The population of the District is very irregularly distributed. The approximate density to the square mile in the plain part of the District (including the hilly parts of Hattā and Bhādra) is 242; in the rest of the District it is only 43 to the square mile; the average density for the whole District being 104. The District thus stands 11th in density in the Province, being the most sparsely inhabited of any of the rice Districts except Chanda. The proportion of the sexes in 1891 was 1,011 females, and in 1901, 1,070 females per 1,000 males. As pointed out in the Report on the Central Provinces census for 1901, the increase in the number of females per 1,000 males follows in this as in most Districts on the decrease in the total population. The birth-rate from 1891 onwards has ranged from 46 in 1899 to 17 in 1897. In the three prosperous years from 1891 to 1893 inclusive it ranged from 36 to 41. The urban population of Balāghāt is confined to the headquarters town, which has steadily risen from 4,136 in 1881 to 6,223 in 1901 The proportion of unmarried per 10,000 of female population is 3,733, the highest for any District in the Central Provinces save Mandlā, Betūl and Sambalpur. This is no doubt due to the large aboriginal element in the population. At the

census of 1901 no less than 15,000 persons, resident in other Provinces, returned the Bālāghāt District as their birth-place, while the proportion borne by the number of inhabitants of the District, enumerated in other Districts, to the District population, is the highest of any District in the Province save Seonī. This is due to the annual exodus in March and April from the north of the District to the wheat tracts of Seonī and Mandlā, and to the fact that the tracts of Katangi and Lānji send large numbers of persons to Berar every year for the cotton picking, after the Dasahra. Wages are far higher there than in Bālāghāt, and many of the *jhāris* (or jungle folk), as the inhabitants of Berār and Nāgpur call them, stay up to the rains for general casual labour; while some even make a permanent home in Berār and never return to Bālāghāt.[1] An enquiry held in the month of December 1904, showed that in some 50 villages round Katangī not a single labourer was available for work: all had left for Berār. Here as elsewhere it is noteworthy that the returned emigrants make no attempt to copy the improved methods of cultivation that are practised in Berār. In common with the Districts of Seonī, Chhindwāra and Wardhā, the Bālāghāt District exhibits a comparatively high proportion of immigrants. In Bālāghāt this is probably due to a variety of causes, the workers on the railway, the return of emigrants from Berār bringing with them children born during their absence from the District, and immigration into Baihar. The census figures of population were 34,000 less than those deduced from the annual vital statistics, a difference of 10 per cent. This is no doubt partly to be accounted for by emigration.

Names of villages.

46. Village names in the Bālāghāt District rather tend to the commonplace. At the same time, in the process of ryotwāri colonisation that is going on in Baihar, frequent opportunities occur of seeing the formation of new villages and the consi-

[1] The rise in local wages has now put an end to emigration to Berār (1907).

derations that lead to the fixation of their names. As a rule, when a new name is given to an established village, the name follows that of the patel, or has some religious or auspicious signification. Names derived from natural objects are applied in the first instance to uninhabited spots in the jungle, at which villages may afterwards be established. It is a proof of how little effect scenery has on the rustic mind that places are seldom called after such natural features when there is anything else to call them after. It is only where a spot is unmarked amid the desolation of the surrounding forest save by a tree, a pool or a mountain, that these have suggested a name. From the above generalisation places with sacred associations must of course be excepted.

The largest class of names no doubt are those based on the names of persons or deities. Lachmanpeth, Dinātolā, Bhadūkotā are examples of the first; and Lānji, Rāmpurā, Bisrampur of the second. Sometimes the persons are the existing patels who call the lands after their own names; sometimes more or less prehistoric individuals, such as Hatte Singh, after whom Hattā is supposed to be called, and here there is often ground to suspect eponymous invention. Various natural objects come next. Dongaria from *dongar*, a hill; Patharsahi, from *pathar*, a stone, (this village is situated on an isolated rocky hill); Bhurbhuria, meaning a bubbling spring; Armidādar, *dādar* meaning a flat hill top; Garāghāt, the cart pass; Chāndadoh, from a *doh*, a pool. Trees and plants are favourites. Gararibaherā, the hollow of the *garāri* (*Lebedieropsis orbicularis*) trees; Ghunāri (a kind of grass); Bargaon from the *bar* tree; Kachnāri from the *kachnār* tree; Pīpalgaon from the pīpal; Jamunia from the *jāmun* tree; Mau and Mohgaon (the commonest name in the District) from the mahua tree; Tumari, a gourd, are all names of frequent occurrence

Next come animals, with Arnāmetā from *arnā*, a buffalo; Bagholī, Bāgdehī, Bodā reminiscent of tigers and bison; Magardarā from *magar*, a crocodile; Gaikhuri, Belgaon after

the cow and the bullock; Kukarrā from the Gondī word meaning a dog; Sārasdol from *sāras*, the demoiselle crane. Next come the large class of names derived from common household utensils; Lorā, a roller for grinding spice; Kundekasā from *kunde*, a rice pounder; Nandgaon from *nānd*, a large vessel; Silajhirī from *sila*, a grinding slab; Diyādāma from *diyā*, a lamp. Then there are names based on objects actually existing in the village, such as Bhīmlāt, from the pillar (*lāt*) of Bhimsen, near the Banjar; and Garhī from the remains of the old fort there. Agriculture also takes its share in naming villages, numerous names containing the word *dhān* (rice), such as Dhankosā, Dhansuā; Binorā from the cotton-seed; Dudhī from *dūdh* (milk); Kodobarrā, a kodon field; Wānjipār from the Gondī word *wānji* rice Castes have given their names to not a few villages, *e.g.*, Baigānagar, Thākurtolā, Pathāntolā, Bāmhangaon. Other names are more abstract—the inevitable Nayāgaon or new village; Hirāpur the town of the diamond, probably a merely ornamental title; Jāgpur, the town of the watch or of the sacrifice; Jūnewāni, the old village; Lohnāra, the place of the spilling of blood Metals have given their names to a few villages, such as Sonegaon, Sonewāni, Lohāra. Bālāghāt contains but few of those curious pairs of names so often found in Chhattīsgarh, such as Māma Bhāncha, Kahuā Jota; the only one of any note is Būrha and Būrhi. These are probably due to a partition having taken place at some previous time or to a fanciful contrast of the size and shape of the two villages. There is a curious juxtaposition of villages occurring in two places in Baihar, where Lagmā Gudmā and Samnāpur are the names of two separate and widely distant sets of adjoining villages.

The usual words meaning 'village' are—*kherā*, as in Dhankherā, *tolā* as in Huddī-tolā; *pur*, as in Samnāpur; *peth*, as in Lachmaupeth; *gaon*, as in Benegaon: *pāra* as in Gangulpāra; and *wāra* meaning a mansion or large house as in Paraswara Of these, *tolā*, *gaon* and *pur* or *puri* are the commonest. *Tolā* is the regular word for a hamlet, of

which many villages have several, usually with different names. Sometimes the names are entirely different as Raundātolā and Singhbāgh, *tolās* of Baihar: sometimes they are merely known as 'patel tolā' or 'Baigā tolā' of such and such a village according to the caste or persons who inhabit them.

Health of District.

47. The District is singularly free from diseases of the bladder and cases of stone are very rare. Phthisis also is not common. Pneumonia is somewhat prevalent in the Baihar tahsīl, where the intense cold in the winter months is very trying to natives, especially to residents of the plain, unless they refrain from bathing in the early morning on an empty stomach, and similar practices. Guinea worm is not known in the District

In fact, were it not for the prevalence of malaria and malarial cachexia of a severe type, the District might be regarded as a healthy one. From August to November, however, the uplands are extremely feverish. A special allowance is given to officials posted to Baihar: and it is well earned. Baihar village is itself exceedingly feverish and the removal of the tahsīl station to Paraswāra has often been discussed: but too much has been spent by Government on bricks and mortar to render a move either likely or desirable. Baihar was for long dreaded as a penal settlement: and it is only recently that Government, by promoting the comfort of its employés there, by the recognition of the importance of the forest and revenue development work of the tahsīl, and by opening up good roads to the plateau has been able to remove this stigma. The water of Baihar is popularly supposed to be rendered specially unhealthy by the presence of floating particles of mica, which are believed to injure the digestion: but chemical analysis does not bear this out.

Cholera is not a very frequent visitor to the District, owing to the prevailing use of well water: but in Baihar wells have hitherto been insufficient, and it is no doubt largely

on this account that settlers from the plains succumb to the attack of sickness. Much is now being done by Government to assist in the construction of wells in newly constituted villages. Since 1891 deaths from cholera have only on two occasions exceeded 1,000. Deaths from small-pox have only twice exceeded ·63 per mille.

Fevers are specially fatal. Excluding the 'famine fever' of 1897, deaths by fever have been as high as 38·92 per mille: and rarely fall below 20 per mille. A large proportion of the population suffer from malarial cachexia. The District was fortunately free from plague up till the opening of the railway in 1903-04, when the town of Bālāghāt was infected and 655 deaths occurred In the following year the disease confined itself to the outlying villages in the Hattā and Dhansuā tāluks and to a few villages above the ghāt in the Rūpjhar plateau.

Accidental deaths.

48. Accidental deaths are due to a number of causes which mostly vary with the season. Deaths by tigers and panthers go on nearly all the year round, unfortunately, but are comparatively uncommon in the rains, as at that time of year the people are seldom in the jungle. At that season however snake-bite cases are particularly prevalent. Tiger kills are most frequently reported from Bhādra and the upper Son valley; also from the upper valley of the Kis in Bhānpur, Kinhi and near Birsā. It is believed that more than one man-eating tiger haunts each of these localities. There are always complaints of man-eating panthers near the hills to the north of Lālbarrā.

In the cold weather, the most common form of accidental death is by burning; the people cower over the *ghursī* or chafing dish especially at night, and their clothes are very apt to catch alight with fatal results Children and women are frequently scalded to death by the dropping or upsetting of a bowl full of hot gruel. Later in the year, boys and men are killed by falling from the boughs of trees, where

they have been picking fruit; especially trees that grow in the hedges of the house gardens; where a fall on the spiked bamboo fence is rapidly fatal. In the rains cases of drowning in tanks, water holes, or rivers are frequent. Boys especially delight in catching the tails or sitting on the backs of buffaloes, when they lose hold in deep water and are drowned.

Falling into wells, and falling out of and being run over by carts, are fairly common forms of accident in all seasons of the year. Every precaution is taken to prevent the former class of accident by inducing the villagers to cover wells with gratings.

Languages

49. The census returns of 1901 give 569 persons per 1,000 as speaking Eastern Hindī, (including 443 speakers of Chhattīsgarhī); 258 persons speaking Marāthī, and 166 Gondī. The chief dialects in the plains are a dialect of Marāthī, which is here largely mixed with Hindī, the Ponwāri, which is a mixture of Eastern Hindī and Marāthī, and the Lodhī dialect, which is another mixture between Marāthī and Eastern Hindi. The Ponwāri dialect is really a mixture in which certain terminations like *is* for the passive participle are Bagheli; *la* the dative sign, and *se* meaning 'is' are corruptions of Marāthi; and *khan* as the sign of the participle is from western Rājputāna. A short example given in the Linguistic Survey of India follows: *Konhī māmuskā dui betā hotā O-mā-lhe lāhnone apre bāplā kahis. He bābā, sampati-mā-lhe jo moro hissā se u de-deo. Mag wo-ne unlā apro dhan bānt deis.* "A certain man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father; O father, give me what is my share in the property. Then he divided up his property among them." In Baihar the Sāletekrī plateau and east Bhīmlāt are the only parts where the genuine Chhattīsgarhi dialect is to be heard. Raigarh has the Bagheli form of Eastern Hindī as spoken in Mandlā. Over the rest of the tahsīl the dialect does not differ from what would be spoken by a man of the same caste and position in the plains, except that to the north of Paraswāra the lower Hindu castes speak the Mandlā or Bagheli dialect.

The Gonds in the Sonewāni hills, in the upper zamīndāris, in Mau and the west of the Baihar plateau speak Gondī, but nowhere else. The Chhattīsgarhī of east Bhīmlāt and Sāletekrī exactly resembles that spoken in the west of Bilāspur; these tracts have been no doubt largely peopled from Chhattīsgarh and recent immigrants from the Khaloti or low country, mostly of the Marār caste and of the Kabīrpanthī persuasion, are not uncommon. The chief peculiarities of the Chhattīsgarhī language are the use of two different negatives with much the same signification as in Greek; the past participle terminating in—*is*, plural —*in*; the use of—*har* as the nominative singular and—*man* as plural suffix;—*bo* as the future first person plural termination; *hawai* for *hai*; *lohī* for *hogā*;—*le* as the ablative termination. *Ye kākar bailā hawai*; 'whose is this bullock'' *kokoio nāhin*, 'No one's'. *Olājhan mārwe*, 'do not beat it'; *Kaisan mārbo*, 'why should I beat it.' The Golari language spoken by the few hundreds of the Golar caste who are immigrants from the South of India, is a debased form of Kanarese. It is employed by these people only as a caste and household speech. Hindus liken the conversation of two Golars to two cocks crowing at each other.

50. The distribution by occupations in the Bālāghāt District of every 10,000 of the population is as follows:—159 persons are returned as engaged on administrative duties, which is above the average of 138 for the Districts of the Central Provinces. Under the head "Provision and care of animals" 216 are shown against a provincial average of 258; and 6,655 persons are shown as engaged in agriculture, which is very nearly the provincial average. It is hardly safe to generalise about such figures as these, so many of the operations comprised under the above head being subsidiary ones. The figures for personal and household service are 157 against a provincial average of 242. This deficiency is due to the low standard of comfort which Districts largely peopled by aborigines share with Chhattīsgarh. Thus a special water carrier is not

Occupations.

usually employed in most households in this District. Under the head "Food, drink and stimulants" 551 persons are employed. There are few Muhammadans and the town population is insignificant, and thus there are not many butchers or keepers of cook shops; on the other hand Kalārs are numerous, the population being a good deal given to drinking; and sellers of parched grain and sweetmeats are numerous in the weekly bazars. The District contains 508 persons engaged in textile industries or about the provincial average, coming next in importance after Nāgpur, Bhandāra, Narsingpur, Chānda and Nimār. The weavers of the District mostly live in Katangī and South Karolā. The numbers employed in industries connected with metals are 171; the brass workers of Wārāseoni and the village blacksmiths make up most of this class. Carpenters and mat-makers account for 119 only; but the making of bamboo *tattīs* has lately received a great impetus owing to the railway having made the Nāgpur and Berār demand effective here; the price of bamboo articles has nearly doubled. Basors are the chief caste engaged in bamboo work. So called 'learned and artistic professions' account for 111; priests, *bhāts* and medicine men make up most of these. Under the head of earth-work and general labour 687 are shown against a provincial average of 330, but there are wide divergencies in nearly all Districts under this head, which are probably due to the different principles employed in classification, the heading being one which it is almost impossible in a rural tract to distinguish from agricultural labour. Only 90 persons were shown as independent, against a provincial average of 141. The retired class, such as holders of Government stock or persons in receipt of a maintenance allowance are very few here. Only 59 leather workers are shown against a provincial average of 105; hides being nearly always sold to outside contractors by the kotwārs. A proportion of 42 persons are shown as engaged in commerce; this is only about half of the provincial average of 83, and

is lower than in any Districts save Mandlā, Bilāspur and Sambalpur. There are very few professional grain or money-lenders here, partly because of the severe losses of the famines; partly because the large number of millet-growing aborigines do not need to borrow seed-grain; but mainly because, as in Chhattīsgarh, the grain lending is largely in the hands of the agricultural classes. Further, owing to the small area of cultivated land per person, the average wealth per head is small, and there is not much scope for shops; distribution is effected through bazars, of which each shopkeeper visits six or seven every week, thus doing the work of several shopkeepers in wealthier Districts.

RELIGION.

51. In this as in most Districts in the Central Provinces Hinduism is entirely preponderant both in numbers and in influence. The number of persons reported in 1901 as professing this religion was 244,536, which includes almost all the more intelligent and civilised inhabitants of the District. The Animists are the next in importance, numbering 74,892. They include Gonds and similar forest tribes: but the more intelligent members of the Gond caste have long since become almost entirely Hinduised and the rest of the caste are following them. The Gond caste revival that took place in 1906, being directed mostly against foods and drinks which were unacceptable to the higher caste Hindus, had a distinctly Hinduising tendency. Those Gonds who have become Hinduised carry their new zeal to absurd lengths and it is said even wash the wood with which their food is to be cooked. There are 17,038 Kabīrpanthis in the District, mostly in the parts bordering on Kawardhā, where one of the heads of the sect lives: they are most numerous in Sāletekrī, Bhimlāt and Raigarh: and find their chief adherents among Pankās, Marārs and similar low castes. Scattered members of the persuasion are found all over the District. The wandering

*Gonds and Hindus.*

priests of the caste, with their conspicuous white head-dresses, visit such parts of the District as they think likely to yield them enough offerings to make it worth their while, and the local Kabīrpanthīs often go to see their Gurū at Kawardhā.

The Jains, numbering 402, are found mostly in Bālāghāt, Katangī, and Wārāseonī: they are all Parwars or other Baniās. They have a small and modern but handsome temple at Wārāseonī.

Christians.

52. Christians number 219, including 191 natives and 28 Europeans and Eurasians. The station is under the visiting charge of the Chaplain at Kamptee. There is a non-sectarian Mission in the District, under the superintendence of Mr. J. Lampard. It has stations at Bālāghāt, where there is a school and a church: at Baihar where there is an orphanage for boys and girls with a lady missionary in charge, and cultivation: and at Nikkum, where boys are received after they leave the orphanage; and there are also a number of converts in this and surrounding villages, with a farm, a school, a church and a resident missionary in charge. The total number of adherents is 150. The mission was started in 1893; and after a successful career of 12 years, affiliated itself in 1906 to the American Episcopal Methodist Mission.

Primitive ceremonies.

53. The everyday life of the ordinary Hindu cultivator is largely bound up with religious observances. An agriculturist has great faith in the invisible forces of nature. At every stage of his annual operations he has some deity or other to propitiate. A brief summary of his religious observances from the beginning of agricultural operations to the time of harvesting will not be without interest.

During the week preceding Akhā Tīj, which falls in the month of April, the farmer begins to enquire about the *muhūrat*, *i.e.*, who is the person who should start the ploughing and sowing, what kind of rice should be first sown, and what kind of animal should be first yoked. During the year

in which this chapter was written the *muhūrat* was Hiranāk rice, a ploughman whose name began with the syllable *Hi*, and a white bullock.

This information is supplied by a Brāhman astrologer, but in the absence of such a person the decision of some village elder is followed. It sometimes happens that the tenant does not possess a bullock of the colour prescribed; but he will get over this by applying to the forehead of his own bullocks a mark of the corresponding colour. The *muhūrat* is a subject of frequent discussion at home and abroad during the week or fortnight preceding the Akhā Tīj. On the Akhā Tīj night the farmer goes to his field in all solemnity with some rice, an onion, and the essential requisites of Hindu worship, *dhūp*, *dīp* and *naived*, (*i.e.*, scent, light and food for the gods). After the worship of the Earth Mother or of the tutelary gods, five handfuls of rice are broadcasted on the ground and a plough-iron representing a plough is made to plough five furrows. Before this is done, sowing must not be undertaken. But before sowing is generally commenced, the ceremony of *bidrī* must be performed by the Pujāri, who makes an offering of a cocoanut to the tutelary deities of the village on behalf of the whole community, after which he gives general notice to the village that sowing may begin. The Pujāri gets a present of a pice or two for his duties from each tenant. When the seedlings in the rice nursery have reached the height of about 6 inches, the Pujāri goes round with a handful of seedlings from house to house; of these he attaches a few to the eaves of each tenant's house, thus giving notice that the time of transplantation has come and receiving a gift for his labour in the shape of grain or cash.

Ceremonies at transplantation.

54. The transplantation must be preceded by worship, and thus on the day the operations are to be started an agriculturist will go to his field with *dhūp*, *dīp* and *naived*, worship the gods, and, after planting out five seedlings, will

start preparing his field for transplantation. The day on which transplantation ends is a day of great jubilation among the agricultural community. The farmer goes to his field with a procession, musicians, etc., and with the paraphernalia of worship, as well as *ghungnī* (boiled wheat) and liquor. All implements of ploughing, including the *ghorīs* or foot-rests for rice transplantation, are washed and heaped together. Five pits are dug and boiled wheat is put into each of them, and after the offering of a few drops of liquor the pits are closed. The labourers partake of the remaining liquor and throw mud at each other in sport. The party then return home with music playing, guns firing, and the labourers singing. All ploughing materials which up to this time have been left in the field are brought home. When they reach home the plough cattle are worshipped by the *ārtī* ceremony. Meantime the women servants have gone on in front, and closed the gate against the men folk and refuse to open it until they have made the former give them some cloth or grain. They draw pictures on the granary of five rectangular figures, of a ploughman, and of a plough, in the wet earth brought from the field. They are then given oil and sent off to bathe after which they return to the house. Five *ahwātins* or women whose husbands are alive, are given five handfuls of rice each together with *ghungnī* and *jagrī*. The male servants are also given similar gifts.

Harvest ceremonies.

55. After the crops are cut and stacked, the threshing floor is scraped, levelled, and plastered over with mud to make a smooth surface. A post (*mend*) is fixed into a hole about one *hāth* in depth, an egg and *pān-supāri* are placed in the hole, and the ground is well rammed. Threshing is then started. The day's outturn is measured and compared with the number of sheaves threshed, and, if the outturn falls short of his estimate, the tenant suspects that the *bhūts* have been at work, and seeks the aid of the Pujāri. The latter takes a blade of grass and glides the fingers of both hands upwards and downwards, at the same time

muttering some incantations. He decides what rites are necessary according to whether the blade appears to him to increase or decrease in size. In some cases he makes a cross of a worn-out sacred thread, places a lamp in the middle and swings it to and fro He takes a pinch of rice and muttering '*sat kahnā*', (Speak the truth) he throws it on the ground and if an odd number falls, he is sure a *bhūt* has been meddling with the grain; he prescribes the necessary offering, after which the floor is again cleared and threshing resumed. While threshing continues, each time that the bullocks are relieved, some straw is taken out and burnt in one corner. Each day a small rope is twisted, and mixed with the ashes, and the dung and hairs of the bullocks, the tenant muttering '*Chhor Sanjogī jatkī ghatkī bhūt Shaitān kī Chhor Sanjogī*, thus propitiating the spirits of earth and water, so that no harm may happen to the bullocks. These pieces of rope are collected, and, while measuring the outturn, these and all the implements of threshing are kept close to the heap of grain and an offering of *dhūp* is also made to the measure which is purified by smoke before it is used The measurer sits with bare head and observes perfect silence all the time of measuring.

Every three years the village community raise a subscription and propitiate all the village gods without exception. This is called Badī Sanjori. A Gond Pujāri is necessary for this worship, and he makes appropriate offerings to each of the deities. Some gods require the sacrifice of life and some are content with an offering of fruits or herbs only.

CASTE.

56 The only castes which are sufficiently distinctive of the District to merit a separate notice are the Gonds, Baigas, Marārs and Ponwārs.

Principal castes

57 The Gonds are the most numerous caste in the District, aggregating 73,400. They are found all over Baihar and in the forests of the Bālāghāt tahsil, where they are mostly cultivators: in

Gonds

the plain villages they have usually sunk to the level of field servants; and it would seem that even the few dwellers in the hills must ere long share the same fate, for they fail conspicuously as agriculturists when brought into contact with the more enterprising Hindu immigrant. Even so, however, the future of the caste seems not without hope. Many of the Baihar Gonds are taking to transplanting their rice, now that they realise the serious competition to which they are exposed from the Ponwārs in ryotwāri villages, and there are not wanting, here and there, Gond cultivators of substance in the plain villages, who have worked their way up from farm-servants. The Gond language, roughly speaking, exists only to the east side of a line through Baihar village. In Bhimlāt and Raigarh, everyone, Gond or Hindu, speaks Chhattisgarhī, though Gondī still lingers in the wild uplands of Kinhi and Bhānpur In the Paraswāra tract, and in Sonewāni Gondi is generally spoken, in fact the Sonewāni forest villagers bordering on Seonī very rarely speak Hindī, and, when they do, speak it as a foreign language. The eastern Gonds hardly understand Gondī. Colonel Bloomfield states that he remembers a time when the Gond language once extended much further east and witnessed its gradual extinction in the Bhīmlāt tract. It is extraordinary that so simple-minded and uneducated a caste could ever have possessed so complicated a system of government and so extensive a rule as legend relates; in fact it seems probable that there must have been some considerable intermixture of the blood of higher castes in the ruling race. The Gonds call themselves 'Koitur'. There are five well marked exogamous divisions of the caste, according to the number of gods they worship, which is from 3 to 7. There are also 12½ endogamous divisions, the half tribe being that of the Gond Gowāras. These tribes are divided up amongst a number of totemistic *gotras*. The Pardhān or Pathāri is the tribal bard of the Gond: this caste is constituted tribe for tribe and *gotra* for *gotra* like the Gonds: and the Pardhāns of any *gotra* are the minstrels of

the Gond *gotra* and tribe of the same name. The males of the Gond caste have no characteristic dress: but the females wear their *lugrā* in a peculiar way; the lower part is wound tightly round the waist and legs which it only encircles high up near the body, leaving a great deal of the thighs bare. The rest of the garment is passed across the front of the body to the left shoulder; is then carried over the back, passed under the right arm, across the front of the body again, and then tucked into the left side of the portion of the garment encircling the waist. Gondīns also wear a number of glass bead strings and braids of false hair twisted up in their locks to make them appear to the best advantage. On their wrists they wear brass bangles called *mathyās*. They are also always tattooed on the back of their legs and thighs, hands, arms, shoulder-blades, chest and forehead. Ojhās usually do the tattooing. Gondi marriage customs are of convenient laxity and it is difficult to say what is not a legal marriage from a Gond point of view. In spite of this laxity, abductions are common, and Colonel Bloomfield mentions one particularly noteworthy case, where the abductor, an unusually ugly Gond with a hare-lip, was stated by the complainant to have taken off first his aunt, and then his sister, and finally his only wife.

The custom of *lamjhana*, or the purchase of a wife by serving her parents for a number of years, is still common and was stated by Colonel Bloomfield to have been a fertile source of murders; the unfortunate young man, after working for a number of years, finding that his *fiancée* preferred someone else, would wreak his vengeance on all and sundry.

Gond cultivation is as a rule inferior. In the wilder zamindāris the aboriginal *bewar* cultivation like that of the Baigās is practised, but elsewhere a modification of *bewar* is common. The brushwood and trees are cut down and burned, and the ground is ploughed up, leaving the stumps, etc., untouched: and after a fall of rain, kodon, kutkī, light rice, *samā*, etc., are sown. This is practised for two or three

years, when the land becomes exhausted and the Gond leaves it for a more promising field of operations. Untilled and fairly level jungle is much sought after by the Gonds. In Raigarh the writer on asking why a very uninviting and jungly-looking village had suddenly become populated, was told that the land was very good, as it had been jungle for many years. Until recently it was seldom that a Gond embanked a field for rice; when he did it was usually only by a ridge, turned up by the plough, and dignified by the name of *chīkhal pahār* or 'mud mountain'; and he hardly ever grows any but the lightest and poorest rice, save in very low-lying fields. He does but little in the way of levelling fields, or of bringing into the rice area the water from a distant slope or of building a tank.

There are few animals that the Gond will hesitate to eat. He will excavate rats with assiduity, and, when the end of the hole is reached and the family of rats is secured, will boil or roast and eat them, skin, hair and all. The fact that a rat has died of plague is considered no drawback. The arithmetical capacity of the Gond rat-catcher was very severely taxed on one occasion on which the writer saw six Gonds catch nine rats (after a long spell of digging), and keenly dispute as to how the rats were to be divided.

Gond traditions.

58. The story of the Gond rule over the Raigarh and Lānji tract has already been given in the chapter on the History of the District. Even now the Gond bards preserve a few remembrances of the old days of their glory, such as the song of Hirde Sā and the Mughal Emperor, a brief idea of which is given below.—

Pem Sā was the Gond Rājā of Garhā-Mandlā and his wife was called Rānī Pohpā. The treasury of Pem Sā was empty. He like the other Gond Rājas had to pay tribute to the Mughal Emperor, but, with no money, he had not the wherewithal to pay. He therefore sought the Emperor of Delhi and begged him to remit the demand. The Em-

peror took pity on Pem Sā and remitted his *takolī* altogether, but imposed one condition only, that he should visit Delhi once every twelve years to pay fealty to him. Pem Sā then returned to Garhā and soon after was blessed with a son by name Hirde Sā. With the birth of Hirde Sā the Gond principality of Garhā-Mandlā began to show signs of prosperity. As Hirde Sa came of age, Pem Sā became richer and richer. Hirde Sā was a great engineer and devised many skilful works. The fort of Ramnagar was built in his time, also the Madan Mahal at Garhā It is said that on the top of the Madan Mahal Hirde Sā placed two big diamonds and two rubies which shed their lustre as high as the sky. The unwonted light was seen by the Emperor of Delhi from his palace and he began to inquire whence it appeared, but none could explain it. The Mughal Emperor then suggested that the Rāj Bhāts who visit a number of Darbārs and kingdoms might be able to say There were in Delhi only two Raj Bhāts present, their names being Ravidās and Kālidās ; they were sent for and asked about the brilliant light. Ravidās had previously seen the Madan Mahal of Garhā. He replied that he would give the information if he received some reward; the Emperor promised to give Rs. 100, or a horse or a village, whichever he chose. Ravidās then told the Emperor about the diamonds and rubies of Madan Mahal, also about Hirde Sā and the wealth of Pem Sā. Thirteen years had by this time passed since the visit of Pem Sā; and the Mughal Emperor remembered the condition imposed by him on Pem Sā who had failed to pay the promised visit. The Emperor then said that now Pem Sā has become so wealthy he can pay tribute again. He accordingly sent five *sowārs* to Pem Sā with orders to realise nine lakhs of rupees for each of the Garhā and Mandla principalities from him, also a gold grinding mill, a gold oven and a gold cooking vessel. He instructed the *sowārs* to bring Pem Sā to him, should he fail to pay everything he had ordered. The *sowārs* reached Garhā after 8 days, where they found Pem Sā at his palace Madan

Mahal, and Hirde Sā absent on a hunting expedition. Pem Sā was informed by the *sowārs* of the Emperor's orders, and he promised to pay. The Sonārs began at his orders to prepare a *chūlha*, *chakkī* and *handī* of gold. Pem Sā then took his food and Hirde Sā returned from the jungles, and found the *sowārs* and their horses present at the gate of the Madan Mahal. Hirde Sā wished to pass through, but was prevented by them; he was offended and he beat all the five *sowārs*. When he saw the goldsmiths working, he said to the *sowārs* that it was very wrong of them to have forced his father to get things made of gold which did not belong to him. He told them also that one Lakhā Banjārā had visited Garhā once and left the gold in question there, when his pack-bullocks on which he brought the gold there died. So saying Hirde Sā went into the Mahal and spoke to his father. He returned to the goldsmiths, turned them out, and took back all the gold which they were working with. He kept back the money also and prepared to go to Delhi. He asked Negī Pardhān his Bhāt and some *sowārs* of his own to accompany him. The Emperor's *sowārs* were ordered by him to return. Hirde Sā took 12 cartloads of tiger and leopard skins with him. They all reached Delhi and encamped in a grove outside the city. Information was sent to the Emperor that Hirde Sā had arrived and encamped in a grove where camping was prohibited by the Emperor. The Emperor rebuked his five *sowārs* for neither bringing the *takolī* nor Pem Sā, but they said that Pem Sā was too old and that his son Hirde Sā had come in his stead. Hirde Sā was sent for and he went on horseback with the 12 carts of tiger skins. On reaching the Emperor's Mahal Hirde Sā saluted the Emperor, remaining all the time on horseback. The Emperor became angry with Hirde Sā at this insult, and ordered him to pay him at once nine lakhs of rupees for Garhā, nine lakhs for Mandlā, a gold grinding mill, a gold oven and a gold cooking pot. Hirde Sā said that the Emperor had given valuable territory to other kings and only jungle to his father,

that gold is not to be found in jungles, that his ancestors and his father killed tigers and bears and colonised Garhá, that his father was too poor and could not pay any money and that if payment was insisted on, his father and he would abandon the country. At this the Emperor said that he must be a rich man seeing that he had erected the Madan Mahal at a cost of many lakhs of rupees. Hirde Sá then showed the skins of the tigers, bears and leopards. He said that he got rewards from *sāhūkārs* and rich people for showing the skins and this was how his family had won wealth and reputation. The Emperor was amused at this story, and also at the request of Hirde Sa for an *inām* from the Emperor for showing the skins; he therefore waived his claim to tribute and gave a *sanad* inscribed on brass and lead plates bestowing the principalities of Garhā and Mandlā to be held free of tribute. The Emperor gave twelve maunds of gold to Hirde Sā who returned home and was welcomed by his family, who had become very anxious about him.

The Gonds are short, dark and muscular with flat features and low foreheads. They are faithful and hard-working as servants, though not very intelligent. Their worst vice is drink, to which they are much addicted: few holidays, weddings, or funerals pass without drunkenness: at the Pola and the Holī especially they get exceedingly drunk, and a wedding would hardly be thought legal without general drinking to excess. The Holi is their great festival; any official who would pass through Gondi villages at that time must prepare himself with plenty of small change, or he will have to run the gauntlet of a number of Gond ladies who will pelt him with sticks and small stones and very likely give him a smart cut or two as well if he doesn't pay his footing.

Gonds burn their dead as a rule; the ashes are placed under *chabūtras* with stone sides which are usually found outside most Gond villages and are known as *thāpanās* or *guddīs*.

A remarkable movement is at the present time (1906) taking place among the Gond caste. At the instigation of a few of their leading men who were desirous of raising their caste in the social scale, they bound themselves to abstain from impure food, from ploughing with cows and from liquor drinking. The movement has lasted for a few months only, but it has spread over the whole of Baihar and its adherents have at any rate withstood the temptations of one marriage season.

Marārs.

59. The Marārs or Mālis are a very important caste in Bālāghāt, numbering 41,617 or 13 per cent of the population. Nine villages are owned by the caste. They are specially numerous along the banks of those rivers that bring down a good deal of alluvial deposit, such as the Son, Deo, Ghisarī and Chunnai. Their caste profession is garden cultivation and they are great growers of tobacco and sugarcane. They mostly irrigate by a *dhenklī* or dipping lift, from temporary wells or from water holes in rivers. The pole of the lift has a kerosine tin suspended from the end to hold the water and the other end is counterweighted, to make the water easier to lift. In Lānji there is a different form of lift exactly like a *pycottah*; a hollowed tree trunk is worked on a fulcrum; the end of it nearest the water is hung from a beam and lowered by a man standing on it till it dips into the water, and suddenly pulled up when it is full of water by the man who works it transferring his weight to the further end. This jerks the water up, and it runs along the hollow of the log into the water channel. This method can only be employed for a lift of a foot or two, but it gives good results, especially when several men work on a row of such lifts side by side. For sugarcane and tobacco the *mot* is usually employed. The tobacco cultivation of the caste on the Son and the upper Waingangā is especially noted. Near Lānji the large cane is cultivated, and in the rest of the District the lighter *kathai* cane. The Marārs do general

cultivation as well; but as a caste are not considered skilled agriculturists. The proverb about their cultivating status is—

*Marār, Māli jote tāli,*
*Tāli margai,*
*Dhare kudāli.*

'The Marār or Māli yokes cows; if the cow dies, he takes to the pick-axe:' implying that he is usually not rich enough to keep bullocks. Ponwārs look down on them as growers of petty crops like *samā* and kutkī: these are very often taken as catch crops off the light alluvial soils in which the Marār does his garden cultivation. It is necessary for the Marār's business for one member at least of his family to go to market with his vegetables; and the Marārin is a noteworthy feature in all bazars, sitting with her basket or garment spread on the ground, full of white onions and garlic, purple brinjals, and scarlet chillies, with a few handfuls of some strongly flavoured green stuff, such as *methi* or other kinds of *bhaji*. Whether from the publicity which it entails on their women or from whatever cause, the Marārin does not bear the best of reputations for chastity: and is usually considered rather a bold, coarse creature. Her distinctive attire lies in the way she ties up her *dhotī* so as to leave a tail sticking up behind, whence the proverb shouted after her by rude little boys: 'On this roof and on that roof jump, monkey. Pull the tail of the Mararin, monkey'. She also rejoices in a very large *tiklī* on her forehead and in a peculiar kind of *angia* (waistcoat). The caste are usually considered rather clannish and morose. They live in communities by themselves, and nearly always inhabit a separate hamlet of the village. The Marars of a certain place are said to have boycotted a village carpenter who lost an axe belonging to one of their number, so that he had to leave the neighbourhood for lack of custom. Instances are not wanting of their combining to turn out an unpopular mālguzār, or refusing to pay rent. They are not celebrated

for their cleanliness as a caste. A polite way of addressing a Marār is to call him 'Patel'

Physically the Marār is rather a poor looking creature, dark and undersized: but the women are often not bad looking, and, when dressed up in their best at a wedding, rattling their castanets, and waving light coloured silk handkerchiefs, give a very graceful dance.

The Marārs are great worshippers of Devi; they often hold their weddings in front of her temple, and sacrifice large numbers of goats to their favourite goddess at her festival in the month of Māgh. A good many Marārs, especially in east Bhīmlāt and Sāletekrī, are Kabirpanthis and wear the necklace of that caste: but they appear to marry among their Hindu caste fellows none the less, provided they belong to the right *kuls* and *gotras* The caste admits the custom of *sallā pallā* or exchanging sisters in marriage They are alleged to have a custom at weddings, known as *kondia*, of shutting up a young man whom they call the *sānd* all night among a roomful of women: he is at liberty to seize and have intercourse with any of them he can catch; while they are allowed to beat him as much as they like. It is said that he seldom has much cause to congratulate himself.

Baigās.

60. The most interesting. because the least civilised, of the forest races of the District, are the Baigās. The word Baigā has two distinct significations (1) a member of the Baigā caste, (2) (especially in Chhattīsgarh) a wizard, who is usually of some aboriginal caste. The members of this profession are found in many villages all over the District: and their services are much in request in averting cholera or other misfortunes from the village, or in curing snake-bite, etc. The Baigā caste also is always supposed to possess certain magical powers: and it seems probable that the professional Baigā owes his name to the caste.

In the Bālāghāt District, Baigās are found solely in the forest uplands, save in one village in the Mau pargana.

There are 3,442 of the caste in the District. The caste is divided into the following subcastes—Binjhwār, Barotia, Narotia, Raibhainā, Kondwan and Gondwainā. Of these the Binjhwārs are the highest; they abstain from the flesh of the bison: the Gondwainā are the lowest, being said to eat the flesh of monkeys and domestic cattle. The Baigās give the following account of their origin:—

Nangā Baigā and Nangī Baigin were the first created human beings, and were given their choice as to what calling they would follow. They at once elected to live by cutting down jungle They had two sons, one of whom remained a Baigā and the other became a Gond, and a tiller of the land. These two sons married their own sisters, who were born after them, and from these two couples are descended the whole human race The descendants of the elder have continued Baigās, but those of the younger have split up into the various castes, tribes, and people that now inhabit the earth. Another story is, that once upon a time Bhagwān invited all men to a great feast. On one side he placed rice and meat curry for the Brāhmans and Hindus, and on the other side *chapāūs*, sugar and *ghī* for the Gonds and Baigās. Just as all were sitting down to eat, a rat ran out of a hole, and immediately all the Gonds and Baigās made a dash to catch it. While they were doing this, the Brāhmans and Hindus left their places and took possession of the *chapātis*, sugar and *ghī*, in the places that had been arranged for the Gonds and Baigās.

The true origin of the Baigā caste is obscure. It would appear that they are an older and less civilised caste than the Gonds whom they even now speak of as *kisāns* or cultivators, and were probably living as a forest tribe when the Gonds were a ruling caste, many of whom dwelt in cities. They are believed to have lost their own language, though they have a certain number of words and expressions peculiar to the caste. In their natural state they dwell in bamboo wattled huts, with grass roofs, neatly

arranged in the form of a quadrangle round a central space. Their villages are always clean, principally because they rarely inhabit the same spot for any length of time together. Their houses are very low, and the doors are not more than 3 or 4 feet high. Baigās are extraordinarily suspicious of strangers: and as soon as the traveller is seen approaching, they disappear from their huts into the surrounding jungle, leaving behind their women and children who cannot be taken for *begār*, the fate their flight is intended to avoid. Despite their terror of strangers, they are desperately fearless *shikāris*: and many are the stories told of their prowess in attacking and slaying panthers on foot with no other weapon than spear or axe. If one of two Baigās is carried off by a tiger, the survivor will almost always make a determined and often successful attempt to rescue him, with nothing more formidable than a stick or an axe. The Baigā never seems afraid of a tiger: indeed some close affinity is thought to exist between the Baigā and this animal; the Baigā is supposed to be able to avert its visits, or lay the ghost of the man who has been killed by a man-eater, and prevent it from following its slayer and pointing out to him fresh victims. With snare, axe, spear, and poisoned arrow there are few denizens of the forest or stream that the Baigā cannot make sure of: and few, be it added, that he is unwilling to eat. He is particularly skilled at snares and deadfalls: it is a very amusing sight to see a full grown pig suspended by the leg from a tree by a Baigā snare, and rending the air with its shrieks, while the Baigās stand round rejoicing over the prospective feast. He is, as his legends say, king of the jungle: when in his native hills he need never fear any ordinary failure of crops. It was only in 1897 and 1900 that the Baigās needed help, and even then not everywhere. Even in a famine year a Baigā can collect a large basketful of roots in a single day, and if the bamboo seeds, he is amply provided for. Baigās are a difficult subject for famine relief, however; even quadrupled

Photo Etching. Roorkee College

BINJHWAR BAIGAS MAU TALUK.

rates for earth work will not tempt them; the making of baskets, and mats, the cutting of bamboos, felling and logging are almost the only works suitable for them. They never dwell in a village with other castes, but in some out of the way forest-hidden hamlet. they never came forward for relief in 1897, and hamlets of starving Baigās were found only a few hundred yards away from villages where relief operations of all sorts were in full swing. The other villagers pleaded in excuse that they hadn't remembered the Baigās: while the Baigās had said they didn't know that Government assistance was meant for Baigās.

Attempts to civilise Baigās

61 The earliest descriptions of Baihar show the Baigās and other forest tribes ranging over the jungles at will and performing the destructive rites of *bewar* cultivation far and wide. A description of this method of cultivation is given elsewhere in this work. But it may be mentioned here that *bewar* and *dahia* are, according to Colonel Bloomfield, not the same thing, the former applying to cases where jungle is felled and burned *in situ*: the latter to where it is removed and burned elsewhere. The restriction of this cultivation proved difficult at first, and was much resented: now, however, it has been entirely confined to the precipitous hills of the upper zamīndāris, where there is no land suitable for any other kind of cultivation nor forest worth preserving. A settlement was made near Bhanderi, where six villages were reserved for the dispossessed Baigās, and a determined attempt made to teach them cultivation. Grain and cattle were given them: the first was eaten at once, and the second went the same way very soon after. Officials were appointed to see that the seed was actually sown; the Baigās waited till they had gone and dug up the seed; while the cattle in spite of all precautions and supervision invariably developed diseases, as a result of which they found their way, sooner or later, to the Baigā's cooking pot. The attempt to teach this wild tribe to cultivate has

failed: they make excellent forest villagers, and there will always be a place in life for them in the working of the big *sāl* forests of the north of the District, where their axes will earn them a good livelihood. The Baigā is always in demand as a *shikāri*, and the demand is likely to increase if the opening up of the District as a shooting resort leaves the Baihar uplands, as it threatens to do, with more *shikāris* than game. The Baigā is reputed a great magician: besides the power he possesses over the tiger, he is skilled in the knowledge of forest plants and roots, and of all kinds of spells Many and weird are the simples which the Baigā's travelling scrip contains. Among these a dried bat has the chief place: this the Baigā says he uses to charm his nets with, that the prey may catch in them as the bat's claws catch in whatever it touches.

Dress and appearance.

62. His dress is of the scantiest: and is the very least compatible with decency. It consists of a scrap of rag an inch or two wide round his waist. His women folk are somewhat more decently clad in a single cloth round the waist, one end of which is passed over the shoulder. A few necklaces of gaily coloured beads and bangles of glass complete their toilet.

The following description of the Baigā in his native haunts by Mr. J. Lampard, from whose monograph much of this description is taken, may serve as a conclusion

'A Baigā is speedily discerned in a forest village bazar, 'and is the most interesting object in it. His almost nude 'figure, wild, tangled hair, innocent of such inventions as 'brush or comb, lithe wiry limbs and jungly and uncivilised 'appearance, mark him out at once. He generally brings a 'few mats or baskets which he has made, or fruits, roots, 'honey, horns of animals, or other jungle products which he 'has collected, for sale, and with the sum obtained (a few 'pice or annas at the most) he proceeds to make his weekly 'purchases, changing his pice into cowrie shells, of which he 'receives eighty for each one. He buys tobacco, salt,

'chillies and other sundries, besides as much kodon, kutki, or 'perhaps rice as he can afford, always leaving a trifle to be 'expended at the liquor shop before departing for home. 'The various purchases are tied up in the corners of the bit 'of rag twisted round his head; unlike pieces of cloth known 'to civilisation, which usually have four corners, the Baigā's 'headgear appears to be nothing but corners, and when the 'shopping is done, the scrap of rag may have a dozen 'minute bundles tied up in it.'

Ponwārs

63. The Ponwār is to Bālāghāt what the Kunbi is to Berār or the Gūjar to Hoshangābād: but at the same time he is less entirely attached to the soil and its cultivation, and much more intelligent and cosmopolitan than either. One of the most intelligent officials in the Agricultural Department is a Ponwār, and several members of the caste have made large sums as forest and railway contractors in this District: Ponwar *shikārīs* are also not uncommon. They are generally averse to sedentary occupations, and though quite ready to avail themselves of the advantages of primary education, they do not as a rule care to carry their studies to a point that would ensure their admission to the higher ranks of Government service. Very few of them are to be found as patwāris, constables or peons. They are a handsome race, with intelligent faces, unusually fair, with high foreheads, and often grey eyes. They are not as a rule above middle height but they are active and hard working and by no means deficient in courage and animal spirits, or a sense of humour. They are clannish in the extreme, and to elucidate a criminal case in which no one but Ponwārs are concerned, and in a Ponwār village, is usually a harder task than the average local police officer can tackle. At times they are apt to affect, in conversation with Government officials, a whining and unpleasant tone, especially when pleading their claim to some concession or other; and they are by no means lacking in astuteness

and are good hands at a bargain. But they are a pleasant, intelligent and plucky race, not easily cast down by misfortune and always ready to attempt new enterprises in almost any direction save those indicated by the Agricultural Department.

In the art of rice cultivation they are past masters. They are skilled tank builders, though perhaps hardly equal to the Kohlis of Chānda. But they excel especially in the mending and levelling of their fields, in neat transplantation, and in the choice and adaptation of the different varieties of rice to land of varying qualities. They are by no means specially efficient as labourers, though they and their wives do their fair share of field work; but they are well able to control the labour of others, especially of aborigines, through whom most of their tanks and other works are executed. It was on this caste that Lachman Naik relied for the colonisation of the Mau and Paraswāra tāluks, as Colonel Bloomfield did later in the case of Bhimlāt and Sarekhā. Let a Ponwār patel see his way to acquiring a permanent title to a piece of land, and he will labour for years to improve it, in spite of illness or losses, and overcome obstacles that would deter almost any other caste. Some of these early Baihar settlers, who have by their own exertions in an honourable calling raised themselves from poverty to affluence and yet retained the simple manners and devout life of their early days, are among the most favourable specimens of the caste. Moneylending is however an occupation that the richer members take to somewhat readily, and they prove unfortunately rather hard creditors as a class.

Early history

64. The Ponwārs, or Pramaras as they were called, are Kshattriyas in origin. They are said to have ruled in Mārwār and afterwards in Mālwā and to have numbered among their caste the famous ruler of Ujjain, Vikramāditya. According to Mr. V. A Smith, the Pramara dynasty of Ujjain began in the ninth and lasted till the thirteenth century; Bhojā and Munjā were the two

principal Pramara rulers, and Vikramāditya belonged to another dynasty altogether. The name 'Dhākar' by which they are known, is said to have originated as follows :—A certain priest of Devī cut off his head and offered it to the goddess as an oblation. From this sprang four Kshattriya races *Dhā ke Dhākar, Sir ke Ponwār, Būnd ke Bundelā, Rakat ke Chauhān.* 'From the trunk the Dhākar, from the head the Ponwār, from the drops the Bundelā, from the blood the Chauhān.' Dhākar is considered a somewhat opprobrious way of addressing a Ponwār and it is perhaps the case that the term really belonged to an inferior but allied race. Apart from the Chānda inscription mentioning Pramaras, the earliest account speaks of them as having been expelled from Dhār in the time of the Emperor Aurangzeb and settling at Nagardhan near Ramtek Hence they spread over Ambāgarh and Chāndpur and gradually occupied much of Bhandāra, Chanda and Bālāghāt. As a reward for help given to the Bhonslas in the Cuttack expedition, it is said that they were given waste lands to the west of the Wainganga river. Thence they found their way into Mau and Baihar as already described. The Districts where they predominate are Seonī, Balaghat, Bhandara, Chānda and Nagpur: in 1901 they numbered in these Districts 120,828 and in Bālāghāt alone 41,106.

65 Their caste customs do not differ in any marked way from those of the other Hindus of the District. They allow polygamy, and are not very strict as to sexual offences within the caste, though they bitterly resent, and, if able, heavily revenge any attempt on the virtue of their women by an outsider. The men of the caste are on the other hand somewhat notorious for the freedom with which they enter into relations with the women of other castes The marriage ceremonies consist first, of a betrothal at an early age; next, of the marriage proper. At this ceremony, a *mandkā* or booth is erected at the house of both bride and bridegroom. The boy first visits

Caste customs

the bride's house to perform the *māngar māti* ceremony and on the same day the bride's father returns the visit. Next day, the *lagun* ceremony is performed. The *barāt* visits the bride's house: on this day there is bullock racing among the friends of the couple, and the household deities are worshipped.

The tying of the wedding knot is performed, the bride and bridegroom sitting in two baskets with a cloth hung between them The *bhānwar* ceremony is carried out on the following day, when the couple are made to walk five times round a bullock yoke. On the next day further ceremonies are performed, among them the throwing of water, dye, etc., over each other by the party. After this, the wedding party visits the bridegroom's house, when the same performance of throwing coloured water is gone through. This is the end of the wedding ceremony proper which costs from 100 to 500 rupees in the case of a well-to-do family, though the bride's parents have to spend less than the bridegroom's The *gaunā* ceremony is performed when the girl arrives at the age of puberty and goes to her husband's house. There is a quaint song among Ponwārs, in which the mother gives her daughter, at the moment when she is leaving her house for that of her husband, some amusing advice. 'Become your 'mother-in-law's favourite; slander your brothers-in-law; 'get your husband under your thumb: if he will not agree to 'separate from his family, tell him "I am off to my mother's 'house." Get him under your control by any means, or 'else break up the household; leave all shame and modesty; 'fear not the village officers or patel and *pandia*. Go to them 'and tell them to settle your dispute.'

Widow-marriage is a great feature of Ponwār social life. Under the Bhonslas, the head of the caste, called the *Sendia*, lived at Tumsar. All widows and women who had left their husbands, were entrusted to his keeping and he sold them to the highest bidder. This custom has entirely ceased and the price for a widow is now paid to her parents. When the widow is brought to the boundary of the village in

which the bridegroom lives, the axle of her cart is removed and a new one fixed in its place.

One feature of the religious ceremonies of this caste is curious. A bunch of peacock's feathers is worshipped by them in the month of Māgh, under the name of Narain Deo. This deity is kept in the house of a Mahar, who brings it to the Ponwārs when they wish to worship it; on this occasion the Mahār comes and eats in a Ponwār's house and no Ponwār will eat until the Mahār has had his meal.

The caste burn their dead, save in the case of infants and persons who have died a violent death. Ponwārs, though Kshattriyas, do not wear the sacred thread, except that a householder when performing the *shrāddh* ceremony, wears a *janeo* of *sūm* grass.

Ponwārs keep fowls, and they eat the flesh of goats, fowls, game birds, fish, and of all wild animals with hoofs, including wild pig, but do not drink liquor. The vice of *madak* smoking appears to be on the increase among them. There is nothing special about their dress, though they are neatly clad as a rule. The women tattoo their hands and faces. They are much addicted to dances, plays and charades; the first are especially graceful performances. Their caste meetings are presided over by a man called *Sendia*, a member of the *Katrā gotra*, the division of the caste to which the Tumsar *Sendia* belonged. He usually gets a substantial sum of money for presiding at caste feasts and absolving excommunicated parties.

## SOCIAL LIFE AND CUSTOMS.

Houses of cultivators.

66. A Bālāghāt village is usually situated on the highest and best drained part of the village lands. It is compactly laid out, and as most of its house gardens are shaded by mango, tamarind or *jāmun* trees, the village at a distance looks like a grove. In the plains the houses, at any rate of the better class of people, are usually tiled; not so in Baihar, where the dreaded '*bārā baje*

*kī āg'* (fire in the middle of a hot weather day when there is always a high wind) often carries away the accumulated wealth of the village in the fierce blaze of an hour or two.

The house of an ordinary cultivator is surrounded by a bamboo fence which encloses also his *bāri* or garden, in which rain crops of *semī*, beans, *barbat* and maize are grown and very often a little tobacco. Sometimes the house is shut off from the garden by a back wall or fence, but more usually not. The doorway in the fence of the front yard is closed at night by a large bamboo *tattī* called the *darwāza*. Inside this yard are one or more cattle-sheds at each side, and in the centre is a roofed-in *pergola*-like structure called a *manda*. The cattle sheds have as a rule two or three divisions; the plough cattle are kept separate from the cows and calves, in order to admit of the former being stall-fed at ploughing time. Against the wall of the shed and on the ground is a bamboo manger, and outside a trough of mahuā wood called a *dongā*, used for watering the cattle or feeding them with *mānd* or rice water. In these *kotās* is usually a small loft, at about the height of a man's head, called *patwā manda*, on which leaf rain-hats (*chitora*), cattle yokes, etc., are placed. In the back yard the calves are tied up during the day and the carts are kept.

The house is usually tiled in the plains and thatched in Baihar. The eaves come down to within about 4 feet of the ground; the roofing is placed over bamboos which in their turn are fixed on *siwārs*, inclined from the *ārā*, or roof tree. This is supported by two main posts called *dharan*. The inside of the roof is covered with oily soot, the result of years of cooking and the burning of *ghī* and oil. On the roof mahuā, *ber* fruit, castor oil seeds, pulse, and various seeds and fruit are usually to be seen drying in the open season. Outside the verandah is a *patnī* or *pātlī*, a seat consisting of a split log mounted on legs This is used to sit on, especially when any of the family have come in with muddy feet during the rains, and are waiting to have them washed. Various forms of doors exist: in the cattle sheds an *argarā* or *rācha* of wooden

bars is usually found: in the better houses a plank door · in less pretentious abodes a *tattā*, either hung on a bamboo which can be slid along, or simply placed in front of the door.

In the verandah (*chhaprī*) is the rice huller and pounder. The first (*chakkī*) is a stone mill, weighted with mud, and is used for roughly husking the rice. The second consists of a hole in a beam let into the ground, called *okrī*, and a pestle called a *mūsū*; the woman working it sits on the ground with the hole between her knees and pounds the rice; this completes the cleaning of the grain In the plains the *kāndi* or foot lever rice husker is often found in place of this. The bucket (*lejnā*), with which water is drawn up from the well with its rope, is also usually kept in the verandah. There, too, are found bundles of oddments like leaf plates, (*pathrī*) pieces of carts, walking sticks, ox goads, and, in the case of a Gond or a low caste, fishing traps and nets. Over the door a string from which are tied dried mango leaves is usually found, called a *tūran*; this is hung up at the birth of a child and is left for luck. There is usually a ledge by the doorpost to hold a lamp: along the walls of the house and verandah are numerous little shelves and recesses (*takcha*), used to hold various small articles. Outsiders are not supposed to come further than the roof or just inside the door; and at any rate not to go beyond the roof tree or to pass through the house. A search by the police if inconsiderately conducted entails considerable inconvenience on the inhabitants; they have to throw away all their earthen pots used for food and any food there may be in the house.

In the main room the most conspicuous object is usually the grain bin, a large structure of mud raised slightly above the ground and covered in with mud, except when the grain it contains is being used. One or more of these divide off the main room into several parts, which are used as separate sleeping chambers; in these wife, husband and children usually sleep at night. Beneath the bed in the cold weather is kept a *ghursī* or chafing dish of hot ashes; in the

colder parts of the District either the *ghursī* or a fire is kept burning till 9 o'clock in the morning save in the hot weather; and one or more of the household are always found in the verandah warming themselves. The unmarried adults sleep in the verandah if there is no room for them indoors. From the roof, which here, too, is black with the soot of years, hangs a great miscellany of articles; bed clothes are placed on a hanging shelf or *māndhi*; while oil, *ghī*, milk, etc., are kept in pots also suspended from the roof to keep them out of the way of prowling animals.

Words would fail to describe the extraordinary collection of things to be found on the roof beams, shelves, floor and walls of this abode. *Jhūlas*, swings for the children, *sikhās* (*kāwar* ropes), bullock bells, axes, sticks, pots and baskets of every shape and form, especially the neat covered baskets made of *kāns* grass to hold clothes, ornaments, etc., maize cobs or *barbat* pods for seed, spools of string, the making of which is the local equivalent for fancy work, an employment for idle fingers in the rains: bags of all sorts of articles, such as scissors, looking glasses, little boxes of metal, dried *indrāwan* fruit or other native medicine; all these are hung or placed about the house in picturesque confusion. Empty rice baskets (*karangī*) are hanging from the roof. On the ground are the large earthen pots (*gor*) to hold husked rice, *dāl*, etc.; and in the *payā* under the grain bin are winnowing fans, axes, sticks, etc. A dim religious light pervades the whole, and it is not easy for eyes unaccustomed to see into all the dark corners. The prevailing impression made by the *tout ensemble* is, that the entire contents, except the grain and the money and ornaments that are probably hidden in some unexpected corner, would not fetch five rupees at an auction; though in reality every article has its use and the whole would be difficult to replace for a much larger sum. But the same is true in differing degrees of household furniture all over the world. One part of this room always contains the emblems of the deity; sometimes there are

even two *chabūtras*, when Devī or the household god such as Dūlha Deo is worshipped, the *hom* sacrifice is performed, or the *jawāra* is sown. Only caste fellows are allowed to come near the temple of the household god. The lamps used in the worship are exclusively the little earthen ones, burning cocoanut or other vegetable oil; kerosine oil is reserved for secular uses: and is burned as a rule in a three-spouted tin lamp without a wick. A separate room, if possible, but in any case a part of the main room or verandah, separated off by a wall or *tattī*, is kept for the family kitchen. Sometimes more places than one are allotted for this purpose, to avoid a leaky roof or an inconvenient wind. The family are very careful not to allow any person whose presence would defile their utensils, or any such animal as a donkey or pig to enter this room. Here are one or more *chūlhas*, a hearth made of baked earth shaped like a horse shoe, to cook at; and an *irnī*, consisting of two earthen sides, rather like a *chūlha*, on which is stood the pot of rice after cooking: it is then tipped up and the rice-water is poured off into a shallow pan or *kūnda* which stands on the floor below the pot between the sides of the *irnī*. The slab for grinding spices (*sīl*) and the roller (*lorhā*), both of stone, are kept here. To lift earthenware pots off the fire a cloth is wrapped round them; while for brass pots the *kharcholī* or tongs are used.

Firewood is stacked in the verandah in the rains; in the open season a heap of firewood and a stack of cowdung cakes are kept in the *bāri*. Cowdung cakes are usually dried on the ground in Baihar: in Bālāghāt they are often to be seen sticking to the wall of the house.

The picture would not be complete without remarking on the spotless cleanliness of the floor and walls of all the rooms—smeared with mud and whitened, often with a dado of red ochre or yellow colouring: and on the queer faint smell, unlike anything else, a mixture of cleanliness and stuffiness, smoke, rice water, burned *ghī* and spice, that

pervades the houses of an Indian village, and once smelt will not be easily forgotten.

Better class houses.

67. The *wāra*, as the patel's house is called, is built mostly of clay but sometimes of brick. It is surrounded by a long blank wall fronting the village street, which on its inner side forms, with the assistance of a sloping roof, a series of sheds for cattle and stores for carts and miscellaneous agricultural lumber. On each side of the main entrance gate as a rule is the *bangalā*, as it is called, where travellers whose position entitles them to the patel's hospitality are accommodated. Within is a courtyard, in which cattle, goats and the patel's screaming pony are tethered, while cats and dogs and calves wander at will.

The dwelling house proper fronts on this courtyard; on the shady side of it is a *loggia* or verandah, in which the patel receives his visitors. It is usually adorned with pictures alleged to represent horses, elephants, deities, European soldiers and other common objects of the country, executed in fiery blues and reds. The roof and pillars of this structure are often made out of noble beams of teak or *sāl*, bearing testimony to a time when the forests must have been more worthy the name than now-a-days; they are usually finely carved. To the *wāra* repair the villagers when the patel's seedbins are opened before the rains, when a *panchāyat* is held to settle any village or caste dispute, when a local inquiry is being held by the police, and on a hundred and one other occasions.

The only form of house ornamentation attempted by the poorer class is usually the work of Gonds or Ahirs and consists of *swastikas* and various other patterns laid out on the mud wall in red and white earths. Manure is stacked either in the *bāris* or gardens or in some spot outside the village. Sometimes it is pitted, more usually it is thrown out anyhow in heaps and allowed to 'waste its sweetness on the desert air' in the hot weather months. The village

roads are cleaner or rather less filthy than in Nāgpur and Wardhā: but not so clean as in the northern Districts. They are swept and the rubbish burned whenever any official is expected on tour: and perhaps at other times. There are usually one or two wells, and the better castes are not badly off for drinking water: the lower castes mostly have to resort to the nearest nullah or tank.

68. Rarely is a village to be found without its pipal or *bar* tree where a *chabūtra* and images are erected in honour of the local gods, and afford a meeting place for the village elders in the evening. The cultivator rises at 3 to 4 A.M., and in the ploughing season will give his cattle a drink of rice water, smoke a *chilam*, loose the cattle for grazing, and start ploughing at 6 A.M., breaking off at noon, when he will take his *sidhāri* which he has brought with him to the field in a *gadgā* or small pot. The cattle graze and rest till 3 P.M., when he ploughs again till 5 P.M.; he lets his cattle graze again till 6 P.M. when he goes home and after a hot bath has his dinner. But life is less strenuous in the off season. In the higher and colder parts of the District, the daily habits of the people are somewhat different from what they are in the plain. Up till 9 or 10 o'clock during the colder months little groups may be seen on the sunny side of the walls, or in the courtyards of houses, warming themselves with wood fires or chafing dishes. In the plains the labourers go out to their work and return to eat considerably earlier than in Baihar. The village herd takes its departure early in the morning, though private herds usually go out earlier still. Labourers in Baihar do not make a move before 9 or 10 A.M.; they return home about 3 P.M. for the midday meal, then go out to the fields again; returning before dusk or for the evening meal. Lamps are lighted as it grows dark; the groups gradually leave the village *chabūtras* and roads: and everyone is engaged in cooking or eating his dinner. After that, a chat and a smoke with some friend or neighbour and

Village life.

so to bed. There are usually one or more people in the village who can play on some kind of instrument and to their houses people often repair for a musical evening. Every part of the day and every season of the year has its appropriate class of tune, and to start a tune out of season is reckoned a solecism. The recognised terms for describing time are, *sakān*, sunrise: *banihār verā*, 8 to 9 A.M.; *dopahar*, midday; *mahatni*, 3 P.M. when the midday meal is over and ploughing started; *birāni* or *pārag*, when ploughing is started; *diyā battī lagane ki wakat*, lamp lighting time or about 7-30; *jewan rāt*, dinner time, or about 8 or 9 P.M.; *sopari rāt*, or bed time, which is usually 10 P.M.; *ādhi rāt*, midnight; *pahat*, or about 3 to 4 A.M when the buffaloes are let out to graze. The daily life of a cultivator's wife is as follows:—She rises a little before her husband, collects the droppings of the cattle from the shed, cleans up the house and *angan*, fetches water from the well, washes the clothes and cooks the morning meal, which she eats after her husband. She then goes to the field to take her share in the work of cultivation. If her husband has not taken food with him, she fetches it for him. She works in the field all day till 5 P.M. when she comes home and has a bath: she then gets her husband's bath and dinner ready for him. Her only regular amusements are her weekly marketing and her chat with her neighbours at the well or bathing *ghāt*, when they compare notes on the characters of their husbands, and tear to tatters the reputations of absent friends, much like the rest of their sex in other lands.

Bathing is not very carefully practised in this District, especially in Baihar, where a nasty rinse of feet, face, and hands as soon as the day is warm enough, completes the villager's breakfast toilet; and if he does as much again in the evening he is quite satisfied, a complete wash being reserved for great occasions.

The population of the village consists in the first place of the patel and his relations, the tenant body, the

Baniā, the Sonār, and the better class weavers. There is not much difference in the appearance of these, most of them being well dressed, with bordered *dhotīs*, fairly new clothes and silver ornaments. White is the prevailing colour everywhere; while blue and red are the colours most affected by the women. In the parts of the District bordering on Chhattīsgarh and in the case of Gonds everywhere, the women usually wear white. The clothing as a rule is less highly coloured than in the Nāgpur-Wardhā country: the red and white *pagrī* especially not being often found, while the *bandī* or wadded coat of the northern Districts is quite absent, even in Baihar. The proletariat of Mahārs, Chamārs, Gonds and labourers of all sorts are dressed much as they are everywhere and remind one of the proverb "*hotī to dhotī na hotī langotī*" (if there is enough cloth, a *dhotī*, if not, then a *langotī*). Many of the lower castes make their daily bread in somewhat unsavoury ways; they keep pigs, which have a way of poking their noses into the houses of better class Hindus, where they are anything but welcome: however, as long as a pig will sell for Rs. 3 for sacrificial purposes, he is likely to remain. As a rule public opinion compels pig owners to erect huts for the creatures outside the village site: in many Baihar villages truly noble piggeries are to be seen, the animal being better housed than his master. In a separate *tolā*, where the Chamār plies his trade, skins are soaking in pots or hanging from trees; the ground is covered with bits of hides, rotten meat and tanning materials, among which children and puppies crawl.

Apart from the regular village servants of whom an account is given elsewhere, there are a few persons who fulfil various miscellaneous functions. Where there are Ponwārs, they have a priest of the Mahār caste to tell them auspicious days. The Gārpagāri is found in some villages: he is supposed to ward off hailstorms. There is often a Baigā who deals in simple remedies and charms; he is usually a Gond by caste. The *Pāndia* or writer may be of any

caste; he writes reports and petitions and often acts as private tutor to the patel's children.

Village lands.

69. No account of the village would be complete without a description of its land. The land of most villages in this District consists of slightly sloping rice fields, covered with mahuā trees, especially at the top of the slopes, where the land is not sown and where the cattle graze. The lowest-lying fields are the best, and usually contain enough mixture of black soil to make a double crop possible. Higher up the slope are yellow soil rice fields: and in the poorest land, open field cultivation of millets and oilseeds

One or more tanks, often constructed with much skill, and fed by channels which run along contours, are a most important feature. The tanks are usually under the patel's charge, and he settles when to open the irrigation channels, and takes the bulk of the water for his own fields. In the rains, the village lands, viewed from a neighbouring height, are picturesque in the extreme. Patches of bright green, representing the rice nurseries, are interspersed with the darker fields to which the rice has yet to be transplanted, while everywhere little companies of red-robed women are seen, busily uprooting the seedlings. A few months later, and the fields are a sea of golden rice with their banks covered with hedgelike rows of pigeon pea or beans; all this is cut by December, and in January the fields are nearly bare, save for the bright blue of linseed and vetch, and the green of the wheat and gram, while a stack of rice straw and a team of bullocks patiently circling the threshing floor, marks the site of each tenant's holding. The unpicturesque months are April and May, when there is nothing to relieve the bare stubble fields save the fresh rose coloured foliage of the mahuā trees and here and there the flame of the *palās*. This is not the least enjoyable time for the villagers; weddings are the order of the day, and numerous are the processions of carts with gaily decorated tops followed by horses with

gaudy trappings, with a band of drummers in the forefront. The village *shikāri* is pressed into the service to come and fire off his gun to lend *éclat* to the proceedings, regardless of the terms of his No. XI license. Others on business intent are off with their carts to sell grain or to visit the jungles. All these pursuits must come to an end with the breaking of the monsoon, when the orderly procession of the farmer's yearly toil begins again.

Children's games.

70. The games played by the children are strictly regulated by the season. In the hot weather *lonpati* (Hop Scotch) is in force, especially on moonlight nights; and *kho* or touch last is another favourite In the rains the children practise walking on stilts (*pavuri* or *ghiri*), this is left off at the Polā and the stilts carried to and left at the village boundary. In the cold weather *golī* or marbles, kite flying, *gile dān*, (tip cat), *ankh mundī* (blind man's buff), *lūpi chupi* (hide and seek) and *phugrī* (this last is not a very polite game), are the chief amusements. In the late cold weather and during the Holi time children ride on the *shimgā* (see-saw). The *shimgā* is burned in the Holī fire.

Village remedies

71. The local medicine man is a good deal in evidence in the District, and many persons of some education and position prefer his ministrations to those of the accredited hospital assistants. A severe wound, a broken limb, or a carbuncle, however, usually induces a visit to the Government dispensary, and cases of snake bite are also sometimes brought. The village pharmacopœia is usually as disgusting as it is irrational; the excreta of various animals being a very frequent ingredient. A common emetic is the excreta of cats mixed with bugs. Surprising stories of cures, however, are not infrequent: a well authenticated case of recovery from snake bite is given below as observed by a European officer; and if the patient was not suffering from hysteria after being bitten by a non-poisonous snake, the recovery is indeed remarkable. 'The 'mukaddam of one of the gangs had been bitten by a snake

'and was to all appearances dying. When I arrived on the 'scene the man had been bitten some 1 to 2 hours previously 'and was quite unconscious, his limbs were falling about, 'when moved, like those of a corpse, the muscles of his throat 'were stiff and rigid, his teeth were tight locked, and every two 'or three minutes a spasm or shudder passed through his frame. 'On the outside of his foot was a single spot of thin blood. 'Some one suggested that the patient should be taken to 'Bagholī about a mile away, and we put the man into a cart 'and took him off. Chattan Ponwār was sent for and until 'he came the patient was lifted up by 4 or 5 men and rubbed 'all over with the hand. Then two young Ponwārs took each 'one an ear in his hand and sang into them, blowing down 'the ears at intervals, a Ponwār boy of about 12 years old 'put his thumb and forefinger round the ankle of the wound-'ed foot and, rubbing it round, sang a song. In about five 'minutes the patient's eyes opened and the muscles of the 'jaw relaxed. As soon as he could open the patient's mouth 'without the use of undue force, Chattan Ponwār put what 'looked like a piece of dead stick between the patient's lips: 'in five minutes the patient was chewing it, and in 10 minutes 'was talking in a dazed manner. None of the Ponwārs 'would accept money.'

Ceremonies.

72. The ceremonies of the District are almost invariably either those practised in the southern (*dakhinī*) country, or those of the aboriginal tribes. Those described below might be performed by members of a good Hindu caste; where the ceremonies of low caste or aborigines differ widely from these, the difference has been remarked on. There are many persons born in northern Districts who have settled in Bālāghāt: these keep up the customs of their own country, but they are so few in number that no attempt has been made to give any account of their customs. Similarly, many of the Gonds have become completely Hinduised, and their rites approximate to those of good caste Hindus.

73. When a child is about to be born, the *dai* or midwife is sent for; she is usually a woman of one of the lowest castes such as Mahār or Basor. The kotwar's wife not infrequently fills this office, a fact which conduces to the accuracy of our vital statistics. The *dai* oils and massages the expectant mother, to ease as far as possible the entry of the infant into this world of trouble. The mother has to lie on the ground, where clothes are spread for her; she is not allowed to lie on a bed. After the child is born, the navel string is cut by the *dai*; she buries this and the *placenta* inside the house; and a fire is lit over the place. Numerous female friends and visitors usually make their appearance at this time and do their best to support and encourage the patient. But with the best of intentions the unfortunate mother very often perishes from lack of proper attendance and comfort. A fire is kept burning in the birth chamber, and the *dai* draws a line in front of the door to keep out evil, repeating at the same time certain charms. On the sixth day, the Nai and Dhobi are sent for; and the latter takes away and washes the clothes of all persons who were rendered impure by the birth. The clothes of the mother are however washed by the *dai* all the time of her impurity. On the 12th day many friends and relations come and a big feast is held, to which the barber is sent to call the guests The mother sits on a wooden stool (*pīrha*) holding the child in her lap or in a cradle. Round her feet the floor is ornamented with a figure made in rice flour or powdered stone in the shape of a St. Andrew's cross with scalloped edges. Her feet are dyed with lac, and she is dressed out in her best clothes and richest ornaments. The guests bring rings, bracelets and other articles as a present for the child, these they make a show of placing on the child's hands or feet and afterwards make over to the mother. Those who have guns let them off outside the house, while those who have none give the fortunate holder of a gun license a rupee or two to come and

Birth.

fire off his gun for them. On this day the ceremony of name-giving takes place. The name is settled on after consulting Brāhmans, who decide by astrological calculations on a lucky name. Gonds and poorer people do not call in Brāhmans on such an occasion. A *rās kā nām* or name of nativity is not often given to the people of this District. Horoscopes are only drawn for the richer classes. Birthdays are not observed. The name is usually pronounced by some one of the elder members of the family, after it is generally agreed upon. This festival puts the family to considerable expense, as the Nai, Brāhman, etc., expect to be handsomely fed on this occasion; a cow or a sum of money is usually given to the Brāhman by those who can afford it. After the 12th day the mother is allowed to go out of doors, when the *Ghāt-māria pūja* takes place, the nearest *ghāt* is visited and there bathing and other ceremonies are performed. Up to this time the mother is considered unclean.

Death.

74 When a man is at the point of death, he is placed on the ground with his head to the north; he is never allowed to die, according to the English expression, in his bed. All his relations (*sapindās*) sit round him, the chief mourner holds his head in his lap and all touch the body with their hands. The corpse is taken out to burn as soon after death as may be; if death occurs in the middle of the night, the mourners wait till morning. Children, *sādhus*, persons who have died of small-pox or by a violent death, and low castes are buried: every one else is burned The corpse is placed on a *thathrī* of bamboos, after being sprinkled with *gulāl* and *haldi*. A *tilak* is placed on the forehead of a male and a *tikli* on that of a female The best and newest clothes are placed on the corpse and, in the case of a woman who predeceases her husband, all her ornaments. Before taking the corpse away, the bangles of the widow are broken by a widow in front of the corpse. It was at this point that in ancient times a woman used to declare her intention of committing *satī*. A

very old man of about 80 years of age, a Gārpagāri of Bhiri, stated that his grandmother committed *satī* in his presence by leaping into the grave where the corpse of her husband was lying, and perishing then and there, apparently from grief; she was buried with her husband. There are monuments of several *satīs* in the District. Friends and neighbours attend a funeral irrespective of caste, but only the higher castes are allowed to touch or lift the corpse. When starting for the burning *ghāt*, money and cowries are thrown about, which the poorer castes pick up: cries of '*Sat hai Rām Nām, Sat bole gat hai Baikunth kā dām hai*, are uttered by the mourners Half way to the *ghāt* the corpse is set down, the bearers change their position, and *paisā* and raw rice and *dal* are placed on the ground near it. The children and younger brother of the deceased go bare-headed. Fire from the house is carried with the funeral party in an earthen pot, and the materials for the funeral pyre (*chetkā*) are also taken with them. The pyre is built up, and the corpse is placed on its face with its head to the north; after being stripped of all its clothes and ornaments, a piece of gold is placed in its mouth; indeed many persons have gold inserted in their teeth during life, perhaps to make sure of their having the necessary gold at death, a custom like that of the early Romans, alluded to in the law of the XII tables The poorest people put a pice or two into the mouth. A quantity of the wood is placed over the corpse as well as under it; with the wood is placed cowdung and *ghī*, and mustard or tilli oil is poured over the whole. In the case of wealthy men, scented oil is used. Kerosine oil is never used Everyone makes his reverence to the feet of the corpse; and the chief mourner, after imploring the protection of the departed soul on his family and descendants, lights the pyre on all sides. If the pyre is extinguished it must be lit again; some castes stir up and feed the fire continuously till all is consumed: but usually the pyre is left for 3 days, though visits are paid in between to see that all is going on well. For these three

days the whole family is unclean, and must eat food cooked in some one else's house. After these three days have elapsed, the mourners come to take up the ashes. The barber goes with them and shaves them completely save the eyebrows. The ashes are washed in the river or tank and the mourners bathe and wash their clothes The bones are placed in a pot (*gadgā*) This is buried in the earth beneath or hung up in a tree, which must be either a *nīm*, a mango or a pipal. This pot has a cover on it, and above it is placed another pot containing water which is allowed to drip on to the pot containing the bones Beside them is another pot with holes in it, in which a lamp is lighted at night. On returning to the house, a lamp is lit for 12 days on the ground where the deceased died. All the family mourn for 12 days and are unclean. They have to abstain from all food but *dāl* and rice, they may not eat fish or meat, or drink liquor, or chew *pān*, or have sexual intercourse, or do anything except absolutely necessary work. On the third day, boiled rice, water and tilli are thrown to the crows; and on the 12th day, up to which time the chief mourner keeps his head shaved, the relations and friends approach him and comfort him; *pān supāri* is distributed and a *pagrī* is tied on his head. In this District the *panchmī, dasmī*, etc., *pindā* ceremony is not performed save by Pardesīs Those who can afford it take the ashes away to the Nerbudda or Ganges as soon as conveniently possible The Shivrātri and the Rām Navamī are favourite days for performing this ceremony. On arriving at the sacred place the chief mourner holds his two hands outspread, with the ashes, *dūb* and *khas* grass and the *pindās* or funeral cakes in it. The Brāhman performs his ceremonies and tells the mourner to throw the bones into the river. At the same time, the mourner mentions a number of articles of daily use and their price, that he wishes to offer to the deceased: the Brāhman writes these down, accepts their price, says some *mantras* and assures the worshipper that they have reached their intended recipient.

The annual *shrāddh* is performed on the *pitripaksh* in the month of Bhādon on the same *tithi* of that period as that on which the deceased actually died. On this occasion the Nai is sent round to call Brāhmans and relations to the feast and funeral cakes (*pindās*) are offered.

Marriages.

75. As a rule early marriages among agriculturists are of rare occurrence, but they are common amongst Ponwārs, Lodhīs and Kunbis. In all castes the bridegroom's father takes the initiative in arranging the marriage, which is celebrated at the house of the bride, except among Marārs, Gonds and Ahīrs, when the bride goes to the bridegroom's house Among Ponwārs there is a repeated exchange of visits from both sides over a period of a week or ten days. When negotiations are settled, the bridegroom's father makes presents to the bride and the date of the *sagai* or betrothal is determined. The bridegroom's father agrees to pay something in cash or kind; most of the costs of the marriage fall on the bridegroom's family, and the bride's father has to incur very little expense. Among the Ponwār caste, one family will marry a son to thed aughter of another, and in return give a daughter to the son of the other family, which is an economical way of arranging the matter, both sides escaping expense. On the betrothal day the bridegroom's party goes in a procession to the bride's house; the father of the boy bathes the feet of the bride and makes presents of clothes. The marriage date is then fixed either for the same or some subsequent year. Brāhman priests are seldom asked to fix dates The ryots believe that the gods are absent from earth only from *Akhādi Ekādashī* to *Kārtik Ekādashī* and return after the latter period During the rest of the 8 months any time except *Amāvoshya* (moonless nights) is appropriate. Among Phūlmāli Marārs, the time for marriage is restricted to the first three days after *Akhā Tīj*; and on no other day can a marriage take place among the caste. Among Marārs and Ahirs the marriage is solemnised before the shrine of Devi

outside the village, in the presence of the Deshmukh of the community; the bride and bridegroom are held in the lap of some relation and both bride and bridegroom keep throwing *dhān* at each other, each protecting himself against the missiles of the other with a fan; while this throwing of *dhān* goes on, the women of the community sing obscene songs. Among Kunbīs and Ponwārs, a man of the caste takes his seat on the top of the house, and just at sunset, while the bride and bridegroom and caste fellows are seated inside the *mandwā*, mutters,

*Rām Naorā, Sītā Nāri*
*Lagan Lagle Saodhai*

Among Marārs and Ahirs, all marriages in a village take place on one single day. There is a general invitation to all to attend. Whoever comes is welcome, and he must eat what is offered him without objection. Widow-marriages are common among all agricultural castes. It is curious that among Ponwārs a Mahār is employed to worship Nārāyan Deo at marriages, and when Nārāyan Deo is being worshipped all caste restrictions are relaxed. Among Gadhewāl Koshtis the father actually sells his daughter for a sum down, though the marriage customs are formally observed.

76 The villager who may feel inclined to make a pilgrimage has the choice of several sacred spots of local celebrity, besides the more famous and more distant shrines. For the Shivrātri festival there is first the Sāwarjhori, a spot between the Bhondwā and Ahmadpur ghāts, where the Sāwarjhori nullah rises: there is a cave here called Mahādeomandī, which is visited by numerous pilgrims from Seoni, Baihar and the plains. For the inhabitants of Katangī there is the Gaimukh in Bhandāra District; and for dwellers in the south of the District, the Koteshwar temple at Lānji.

Pilgrimages

For the Kārtik *punam* festival there are numerous river *sangams* in various parts of the District; but the places more especially frequented are Madhpurī in Mandlā, the *sangam* of

the Banjar and Jamunia in Bhīmlāt, that of the Gangā and Hirri in Seonī near Sarekhā, though this is less frequented now than it once was; and the Jagpur ghāt near Bālāghāt.

For the Rām Navamī there is Rāmtek, and, at the beginning of Phāgun, Hirdenagar near Mandlā. Beside this, the well-to-do often visit Purī and the sacred places of Northern India. Example is very contagious in such cases, and if one or two leading men declare their intention of going, they are sure to have a number of followers. Such an instance occurred in 1904, when many of the leading men of the District visited the shrine of Badrī Nāth and one of them, the principal banker of the District, as a fitting close to an honourable and useful life had the supreme felicity of ending his days at that most sacred spot. *Pandās* from the sacred places often visit the District to look up their clients and collect their dues, though now-a-days it is more usual to remit these by money order Parties of Brāhmans carrying Ganges water not infrequently traverse the District in the course of their three years journey to Rāmeshwaram. Ganges water is usually sent by the *Pandās* through the agency of these men to their clients in the District, and it is an act of merit to send it on, after purchasing it, to be offered at the shrine of Rāmeshwaram.

The Mandlā-Bilāspur road, which skirts the north-eastern boundary of the District, was once a veritable 'pilgrim's way' to the shrine of Jagannāth: and in bygone years crowds of pilgrims might be seen traversing it, raising at intervals their cry of 'Bom, Bom, Mahādeo': but in these prosaic times it is deserted in favour of the railway, save by a few adventurous souls who think that more merit is acquired by making the dangerous and toilsome journey on foot.

Fairs and Festivals.

77. The chief festivals of the District are the Mandai, the Gar (after the Holī), and the Girī or Nārbod, (after the Polā). The Mandai is on the day following the Diwāli. It is only held

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at certain places, as the holding of a Mandai was considered the exclusive privilege of zamīndārs or rājās, and even now it is not usual to find a Mandai held anywhere save at what is or was the chief town or village of a zamīndāri or tāluk. The Mandais of neighbouring places are sometimes arranged on successive days, so that they may draw as many patrons as possible, the principal town claiming the first turn. A booth is placed in some central spot where the leading man, under whose patronage the fair is held, sits with his friends and neighbours: and the lower caste people give themselves up to unlimited drinking. The Gowāras, for whom here as elsewhere the Diwāli is a great day, get themselves up in their full holiday attire, with painted wooden swords, and cowrie-bedecked flutes of bamboo, and after being well primed with liquor, give their characteristic dance. The much more civilised and elaborate performances (*dandhār*) of the Ponwārs and more respectable castes are also given at this time. A double row of performers stand facing the spectators, with castanets or a piece of wood in one hand, and a coloured handkerchief in the other. These form the chorus, and as they sing, they wave their handkerchiefs in time with the music, and strike their sticks against their neighbours' or rattle their castanets. The musicians stand at the back, and in front are the actors These perform some short piece well known to the people, usually representing the Rāmlīla story, between each scene is a song by the chorus and often a comic interlude between buffoons. A man dressed up as an animal (such as a tiger or a dog) is usually a star performer. The jokes are often exceedingly coarse but amusing, and the singing and dancing very good in their way. One of the dancers at least is dressed up as a female. A present is expected by the performers and they are not often disappointed. No particular form of worship is performed at this time; only the Gonds and Baigās sacrifice a pig and erect the *chandī*, a bamboo painted and ornamented with peacock's feathers.

The Holi is burned on the night before the Gar festival. It is lit at a special hour in the night, of which the *pandit*, if one be available, informs the people. No women are allowed to be present. The pile, which must be to the east of the village, is worshipped before it is set alight. A piece of *semar* wood is required to form part of the pile. The next day dust and stones are thrown about and abusive sentences are shouted out. The women and boys are now greatly in evidence, especially among Gonds, and hold up visitors to their villages and extort blackmail. On the third day the unpleasant red powder that disfigures everyone's clothes on that occasion is thrown about; improper words are written up on the walls or stitched on to people's clothes, and general merriment, visiting, and pleasure taking, and, among the drinking castes liquor drinking, continue for five days

The Gardeo festival begins about midday on the day after the Holi. The usual flinging of dirt and cowdung and red liquid goes on all the morning, which, combined with the abuse which is then freely given and taken without offence, deters most respectable people from going abroad. When the festival is to be held, the people go to worship at the temple of the god Gardeo; and thus return to the *maudā* where the mālguzār and other respectable persons are sitting; they salute them and rub their face and clothes with red powder. Vows are often fulfilled at this festival by persons yoking themselves like bullocks and drawing carts up and down in front of Gardeo: and women take this opportunity to pray that their barrenness may be removed Years ago, this was the great hook-swinging festival. Some person (*Bhopā*) possessed by the divine frenzy was fastened on to the high pole near the image of the god by a sort of giant-stride arrangement, and was whirled round seven times. It is said that originally the hooks were passed through the muscles of the back, though afterwards the people contented themselves with tying the victim on with rope. An attempt was made a few years ago at Lingā (Paraswāra) to revive the practice:

but the rope broke after two rounds, and deposited the performer on the head of a lady who was looking on, with considerable damage to both. The Lohāi was the usual person selected for this more honourable than pleasant post. but in these degenerate days a big brinjal is thought to do quite as well.

The Polā, or, as it is called, the *Jhārthi*, is the festival of the cattle. All day long the villagers fast: and in the evening they take out the cattle, which have been ornamented with red and green spots of paint on their bodies, and their horns gilt or bedecked with tassels, or scraps of gay coloured cloth, to a place to the east of the village, where they are made to stand under a bamboo frame on which a fringe of mango leaves is hung, the whole erection being called a *tūran* There the mālguzār does *pūja* and the people worship the cattle, perhaps in recompense for the sufferings they have inflicted on these unfortunate creatures during the rest of the year.

The Nārbod and Dasahra festivals

78. The Nārbod festival is held the day after the Polā. The people assemble in the last watch of the night, and go with the children to the village boundary, carrying the stilts which are made at the Akhāri festival, and have been the children's playthings throughout the rains. They collect leaves of the wild asparagus (*nārbod*), the filmy fronds of which are supposed to resemble the hairs of the demon Nārbod. On arriving at the village boundary, they throw away their stilts as a token that the rains are over: and then with cries of *Idā Pīda Khānsi Khokhlā Ghsunjā re Nārbod* (an invocation to the god to free them of all diseases) they return to the village, where they amuse themselves with songs, wrestling, etc.

The Dasahra festival is important and is widely observed, like the Mandai, at villages or towns where zamīndārs or rājās have lived. It is supposed to be in honour of Rāmchandra's victory over Rāwan, the king of Lankā. Where the *son* (*Bauhinia*) grows, the people visit the tree and collect

as many leaves as they can, which they exchange with their friends. Where the tree is not easy to find, the Dhīmars fetch a branch from the jungles and plant it in the ground in a public place with mutual salutations. The name of the tree being *son* is supposed to represent the traditional gold of Lankā: and it is thought that the carrying off of a good number of leaves will bring wealth and success for the next year. Cries of "*Jai Rāmchandra Swāmi kī*" accompany the ceremony, and in the evening everyone accompanies the zamīndār or principal person to his house with music and torches, and the songs of the Bhāts. At the house of the zamindār, his wife is found standing with a pitcher of water on her head and a lighted lamp on it She refuses to allow him to enter till he gives her a small present. A goat is sacrificed at the gate, and the zamīndār then enters his house where he salutes his mother, who gives him a *pān* leaf and a cocoanut; he touches her feet and gives her a rupee. The villagers come to the mälguzār's house about 9 P.M. where they receive *pān supāri* from the zamindār and in return give him a *nazrāna* of a rupee or two, while the *mahājans* of the village have *pagrīs* given them by the zamīndār. The rest of the night is passed in listening to music and dancing.

Social observances.

79. The methods of greeting each other employed by different relatives are not nearly so elaborate as in Chhattīsgarh. A daughter-in-law falls at the feet of her mother-in-law; and with this exception the elder of two women touches the feet of the younger. The ordinary greeting among all classes of Hindus, men and women alike, is 'Rām Ram'. A young married couple will not talk in the presence and hearing of their elders; a younger brother's wife will not touch the clothes or bedding of her husband's elder brother, or remove the plates in which he has taken food. Among Mahālodhis, Kumhārs and Gahiās in the Lānji tract, the females observe the following curious custom: When a woman meets an

elderly man, she throws back the end of her *lugrā* as a mark of respect. The locally current explanation is, that in old times, petticoats were worn, and since the change in dress, the end of the *lugrā* is thrown back to give the garment the appearance of a petticoat.

**Meals**

80. The usual custom over the District is to eat two meals a day, the *manjania* at 12 noon, and the *jewan* at 8 P.M. The poorer classes, especially Gonds and those who eat *pej* rather than *bhāt*, eat a third meal at the *mahatni* time or 3 to 4 P.M. The early morning *bāsi* prevails nowhere, save in east Bhīmlāt and Sāletekrī. In the rest of the District the *mānd* or rice water which forms the basis of the Chhattisgarhi morning meal is either thrown away or given to the cattle. *Bāsi,* which is the rice water preserved from the meal of the night before, is usually eaten with a little salt and *mirchī* to give it a flavour. It is very slightly fermented and perhaps for this reason often disagrees with those who are not used to it, or are in delicate health.

For the midday meal, those who can afford it eat *bhāt* or boiled rice; those who are not so well-to-do and especially those who have many mouths to feed, eke it out with *pej*, or gruel of rice-flour and water. With these, such vegetables as the season may afford are eaten, and the *dāl* of some kind of pulse, usually *popat* or *kulthā*, and salt and *mirchī* are added as a flavouring. Vegetables are usually boiled, but are often fried in *ghī* by the better class after a partial boiling; this is the favourite way of eating English vegetables. The same food is eaten both at the midday and at the evening meal. Bread in the form of cakes of rice or wheat flour is also frequently eaten, especially in villages where wheat is grown Kodon, *samā* and kutki take the place of rice for the poorer classes. *Ghi*, curds and milk are a good deal used in Baihar where cattle are numerous: but they are not eaten at every meal even by the well-to-do. On feast days those who can afford it regale themselves with *laddūs*,

*sohāri*, *sattūs*, and other confections of *ghī*, *gur*, sugar and flour. A *sohāri* is a puff made of a paste of flour and *ghī* or linseed oil, and filled with sugar, or in the case of the poorer classes mixed with the juice of boiled mahuā blossoms. *Badās* are cakes of urad flour, fried and afterwards soaked and boiled. A really first-class feast can be provided at anything up to one rupee a head; this is considered a price which ought to include as much of the best of everything as any man can possibly eat. Mangoes and limes are pickled and eaten by the better classes; and in the mango season every one makes *chatnī* of the green fruit.

The women eat after the men, and the children eat when and as often as they like. On journeys, prepared food, such as *chiurā*, *phulāna*, *laddūs*, *sohāri*, *sattū*, are taken to eat on the way. People eat from brass plates called *thāli*, or earthen platters according to their degree in life Where a number of persons are asked to a feast, and there are not enough plates to go round, the food is eaten off leaf plates: of these there are two kinds, a flat one for rice, called *pallī* and a hollow cup-shaped one, called *donā*, for holding liquids or semi-liquids like curds: and when cooked food is brought from a shop, it is usually supplied in a *donā*. A large quantity of rice is cooked in a *handī* and stirred with a *khurcholi* or *chatuā*; a smaller quantity is boiled in a *batuā*. *Sohāri* and all kinds of cakes are rolled (*bilnā*) on a *chaukī* or pastry board and fried in a *karhāi* or frying pan. The custom of marking out a square by sprinkling water round the place where each person eats his food is not observed in Bālāghāt even by Pardesis. but the body is stripped above the waist before taking food. The labouring classes are best off for food between the months of November and April, when harvest work is plentiful and their gardens supply a variety of vegetables.

Clothes

81. Considerable changes have taken place in the dress of the people since the days of Marāthā rule. A bazar day, or a holiday crowd

bound on a pilgrimage no longer present the gay appearance that the beautiful old vegetable dyes of green, red and pink, with which everyone dyed his clothes from time to time as the fancy took him, once gave to such assemblages. Little colouring is seen now-a-days among the men save an occasional red *pagrī*, though doubtless the people generally are better and more cheaply clad than of old.

Various remarks have been given in respect of the castes described in this work where any peculiarities of dress exist. Apart from these there is little that is uniform or distinctive in the dress of the people. Women usually look much cleaner and better clad than men in the same rank of life. The regular female attire is a coloured *sāri*, covering the head and reaching to the knee, with a bodice known as *cholī* or *angiā*, which last, however, is not worn by Telins and Dhīmarins. In the case of a married woman, the upper end of the *sāri* is drawn over the head, while an unmarried girl usually goes bareheaded.

Among the men, the more civilised dress includes a *pagrī* or *phelā* according to taste, the first is tied simply round and round the head, while in the latter half the twists are at right angles to the other half; a coat, and a *dhotī*. A pair of *dhotīs* is usually purchased once a year in Phāgun by men, and women buy a *lugrā* once a year in Shrāwan. The more unsophisticated wear a *mirzai* or loose shirt fastened up in front with strings, or a sleeved waistcoat (*phatoi*) in lieu of a coat. Many villagers wear only a *dhotī* and a *pagrī*. Warm clothes, in spite of the cold climate in Baihar, are seldom seen. The well-to-do wear a cloth rug or shawl in the cold season, while the dark blanket or *ghogrā* of the labourer or small tenant serves him alike in cold and rain. Quilted *bandīs* are never seen. It is as a rule the more advanced members of the community who use umbrellas, though these are to be had at as low a price as 8 annas; the cultivator at his work makes use of the *moria* or *chāthi* (*chatorā*), a shaped bamboo frame-work covered with leaves, either round or oblong, in the latter case

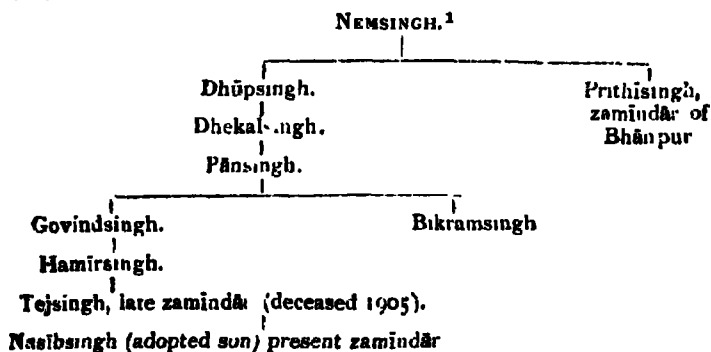
with one end peaked for the head and the other spread wide to cover the back These most picturesque and effective substitutes for water-proofs are especially useful when the wearer is weeding or transplanting; he has only to squat on the ground and turn his back to the rain, when he is completely protected from it and has his hands free for his work. These articles cost from a pice to 6 annas according to quality and locality; they last for two seasons. They would no doubt serve almost equally well as a protection from the sun: but the derision with which a person is greeted, who wears one at any other season than the rains, is not less than that which meets a European fresh to the country who persists in wearing a *solī topī* in the evening.

Ornaments.

82 Most men wear wrist bangles of some metal, which may be gold, silver, German silver or other alloy (*gilat*) according to the means of the wearer. The women wear glass bangles on both wrists. Women of the Cowāra, Binjhwār and Dhīmar castes who are much engaged in manual labour wear only bangles of brass or bell-metal on the right hand, apparently to avoid the constant breakages to which glass bangles would be liable. *Kardorās* or silver chain or wire belts for the waist are not uncommon among mālguzārs and well-to-do persons. The favourite local necklace is the *pot*, usually with gold beads strung on it resembling rice grains: while the women wear the *haslī* and *hamel*, the former consisting of a thin bar of silver or alloy bent to the shape of the neck, and the latter of a number of coins strung together. The nose ornament (*nath*) is never of any other metal than gold. Ear-rings known as *tarpā* (of gold) or *karanphūl* (of silver) are commonly worn by women. The women wear on their fingers large awkward looking rings with rupee or eight-anna pieces attached to them as a bezel (*sikkā mudrī*). *Todas* and *karās* are worn on the ankles Most women save Kunbins, Lodhins and Maharāshtra ladies wear *tiklīs* or forehead ornaments of gilt and coloured glass, attached by gum

LEADING FAMILIES.

Bijāgarh or Sāletekrī.

83 The territory of this zamīndāri family consists of two markedly different tracts; the southern-most comprises the valley of the Son river, and the northern that of the Banjar. The Son valley, where it leaves the hills, is moderately open, and once contained fair teak jungle which has long since been felled; at some few places on the river banks are found deposits of exceedingly valuable soil, rented at as much as Rs. 10 and Rs. 15 an acre by tobacco growers. The rest of the Son valley is the wildest hill and jungle; the main road through it is with difficulty passable by carts, and is very little frequented. The whole tract abounds in game, and a herd of buffalo was said till recently to haunt the hardly accessible forests that fringe the river. There is a little valuable *sāl* along the upper valleys of the Son and Banjar; other jungle products are myrobalans bamboos, *bīja*, *sāj* and *lendia* timber. The Banjar valley is totally different in character, being open and comparatively free from forest. It is largely waste, owing to bad seasons and mismanagement, but is capable of great development. The principal crop is rice, which is grown by *biāsi*, the Chhattisgarh system of cross ploughing; and the inhabitants in their manner of working, their dress, living and speech, suggest their Chhattīsgarhī origin. The early history of the family is included in that of the Bhānpur zamīndāri. The family tree after the separation of the Bhānpur and Sāletekrī zamīndāris is as under:—

[1] The Genealogy furnished by the zamindār of Bhānpur differs from this.

The only event of any interest in the history of this family is the march of the army of Raghuji through the zamīndāri when the zamīndār provided guidance and supplies to the Rājā's force as it marched up through the Son valley jungles to invade Gandai, as the local story goes, but more probably against Cuttack. At that time the estates of Gudwā and Gurkā Bhandāri were given to the zamīndār. The status of the zamīndār prior to 1867 is described by the Settlement Officer in his report as follows :—'The Sāletekrī 'Thakur has a sort of lead in this country. In former days 'he met the Kamaishdār, when it was his good pleasure to 'obey the summons, with "twice one hundred men" at his 'back. Now he is more dependent, his retinue is reduced, 'his barbaric banners are less often flying, his wild mins-'trelsy and noisy welcoming is less frequently heard. I 'should be sorry to see him unable to maintain his position 'as a highland chieftain and a heavy quit-rent would so reduce 'him. That the estate is not a very rich one, the maintenance, 'which by the custom of the family a member receives on his 'marriage, shows He is allotted as much land as two 'ploughs can manage.' The late zamīndar Tej Singh was a man of about 50 years of age, partly literate in Hindī, well meaning, but utterly in the hands of unscrupulous agents, whose depredations the peasantry of the tract had only too much cause to rue The zamindāri has been taken under the Court of Wards, and it is hoped to pay off the debts, amounting to some Rs. 23,000, in about 12 or 15 years. The late zamindār was a Darbāri and *Khās mulākāti* and exempt under the Arms Act. The Local Government have recently recognised as his successor his adopted son Nasīb Singh, a youth of 15 years of age. Of the Bālāghāt zamīndāris this estate alone[1] passes by primogeniture. Two of the zamīndār's brothers, Dhirpāl Singh and Gurdayāl Singh, are also Darbāris, and exempt under the Arms Act, while two more of his relatives, Jīt Singh and

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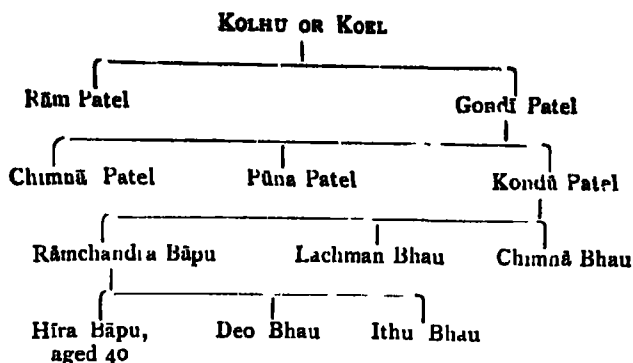
[1] Polā and Kimāpur now do so as well (1906).

Ratan Singh, also enjoy the last named honour. The zamīndār used to manage his own excise but does so no longer.

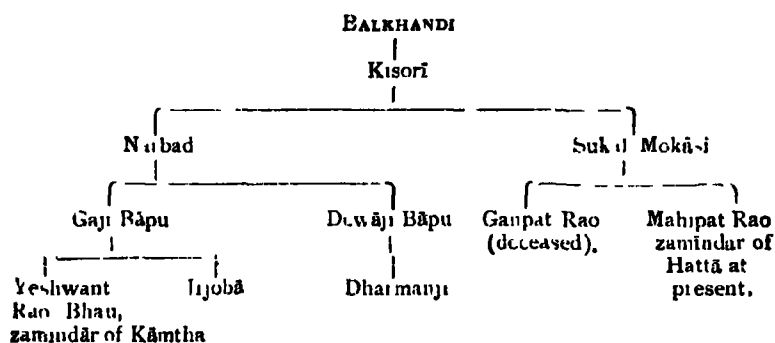
Kirnāpur zamīndāri

84. This zamīndāri lies in the open plain, about half way between Lānji and Bālāghāt towns. It consists of 23 villages out of the 25 that it originally comprised. It is traversed by the Bālāghāt-Lānji main road There is a special interest attaching to this family as the descendants of the once powerful and rich Kāmtha zamīndārs The history of the family in connection with the Kāntha estate as narrated in the Bhandāra Settlement Report is given below:—'Almost all Kāmtha was forest land 'which the Gonds had done little to take up, when, about A. D. '1750, a Kunbī cultivator, a man of means and character, 'petitioned the great Raghujī to be allowed to people the 'tract, and, his request being granted, he became the zamīndār, 'paying a quit-rent of Rs 60. A few years later Bagurbon 'tāluk, consisting of one village, and Pulājar tāluk of three, 'were also given to this Kunbī family, that they might be 'answerable for the quiet of that part of the country and safe 'conduct of the road. Though their quit-rents have hitherto 'been separate, actually the villages have long been part 'of Kāmtha. Deorī-Kishorī, a holding of 46 villages to the 'south of Amgaon, went for similar reasons into the same 'hands. It had been part of a Halbā's tāluk, but on the 'disappearance of this family a partition was made, and four 'existing zamīndārs were enriched with portions of the 'spoils. For 70 years this family held by grandfather, 'fathers and sons, and so successful were their exertions 'that when the tāluk was escheated in 1818, for Chimnā 'Patel's rebellion, the entire sum realisable from it was '72,000 (Nāgpur) rupees. Koel, Gondī and Chimnā 'brought Kunbīs with them, and afterwards imported Pon-'wārs from the adjoining Tirorā. Koel ruled part of the 'tāluk direct, and part he made over to his younger sons and to others who undertook to conquer the jungle and

'people it. Thus the *shikmī* zamīndāris were formed, 'six (including Hattā) in number, much in the same way 'as the *shikmī* zamīndāris now existing, subordinate to 'Amgaon and Binjahli It being impossible personally to 'work these large estates, partners were taken in, who 'became as powerful in their sub-tāluks as the zamīndār was 'in his. Amgaon properly was not one of these, but Koel 'obtained it from the Lānji Subāh for his grandson Sonbā, 'and subsequently it came to be treated as one of the 'sub-tāluks of Kāmtha; this raised the number to seven Koel 'had six sons. Rām Patel, the eldest, followed Koel in 'the management, and was himself succeeded by his brother 'Gondī Rām Patel's descendants hold two villages in 'Kāmtha as inferior proprietors. Gondī Patel held Kāmtha 'and Hattā himself, and secured the succession to his sons. 'The elder, Pūna, lived at Kāmtha as manager of pargana 'Hattā. The second, Chimnā, ruled the Kāmtha taluk. 'Mohna and Kondū, the younger sons, lived also at Kāmtha, 'but had no separate maintenance. In 1818, when Chimnā 'rebelled, all the four brothers were involved in his ruin. 'Subsequently pensions were given them, and the tāluk of 'Kirnāpur (pargana Lānji), which had lapsed to Government, 'and the *mukāsa* villages of Lingā, were conferred on Pūna 'Patel with succession to Rām Patel, adopted son of Chimnā. 'However, Pūna obtained the late Rājā's permission to 'transfer the estates to his younger brother Kondū during his 'own lifetime Kondū's son Rāmchandra Bhau therefore 'owns Kirnāpur, while Rām Patel's son Pāndu holds for his 'lifetime Lingā, in pargana Dhansuā, rent-free. Kāmtha, 'Hattā, Bagarband, Pulājari and Deorī-Kishorī all remained 'in the zamīndār's hands, and were all confiscated in 1818 'on Chimnā's siding with Appa Sāhib.' The family tree is given on page 134.

The estate was at one time held under the Kāmtha zamīndār by a Gosain family, but when or why they relinquished it is not known. The estate having been confiscated at the rebellion of Chimnā Patel, was held direct by Government until 1828, when it was given back to Chimnā, who had been released from prison some 7 years before. He was succeeded by his younger brother, and at the first settlement of the District in 1867 Rāmchandra Bhau was in possession. He and his son Hīra Bāpu fell deeper and deeper into debt, partly from family quarrels, partly from extravagance and vicious courses, till, in 1902, 24 of the 25 villages had been alienated and the zamīndār, Hīra Bāpu, owed over a lakh of rupees. The exertions of Rai Bahādur Anant Lāl, E.A.C., who undertook the debt conciliation of this District, resulted in the restoration of 23 out of the 25 villages, and the reduction of the debts to a sum of Rs. 65 000. The zamīndār Hīra Bāpu surrendered his estate to Government, who regranted it to his son Tīkārām Bāpu under a fresh patent, the main incidents of which were succession by primogeniture and inalienability. The estate is now under the Court of Wards, with every prospect of successfully emerging from its difficulties. The present owner, Tīkārām Bāpu, is a boy of 12 (1905), who is studying in the Bālāghāt Middle School. The estate was once before under the Court of Wards from 1879 to 1892, owing to the minority of the zamīndar Hīra Bapu; when it was then taken over, it owed Rs. 25,000. This was cleared off, and it was found, when management was relinquished in

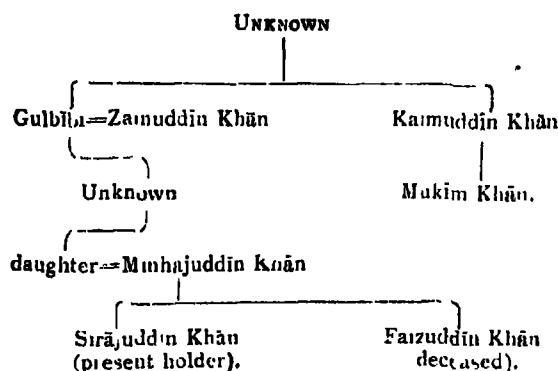
1892, that Hīra Bāpu had contracted debts to the extent of Rs. 26,000 on his own account.

Hattā zamindāri.

85. The zamīndāri family of Hattā trace their origin from the north of India. They are Lodhīs by caste, who are mentioned in the Bhandāra Settlement Report as having settled in Bhandara Khās. Narbad Patel was first given the Warad tāluk in 1815, and afterwards, on the confiscation of the Kāmtha zamīndāri in 1818, that zamīndāri with its various dependent estates was made over to him. The family tree is as follows:—

Narbad Patel gave the Hattā zamīndāri (which was a subordinate or *shikmī* zamīndāri of Kāmtha up till 1856) to his brother Sukal Mokāsi, on payment of a *nazrāna* of Rs. 15,000. The latter's son, Ganpat Rao, succeeded his father, who died in 1869, aged 99 years. Ganpat Rao was made an Honorary Magistrate in 1865, but was deprived of the office in 1869 On the death of Ganpat Rao the zamīndāri was somewhat heavily encumbered with debt, but the present proprietor, Mahipat Rao, has paid off all encumbrances, and is in a prosperous condition. He bears the reputation of being a prudent manager. He is 64 (1905) years of age, and is at present without a son and heir. He resides at Hattā, the principal village of the zamīndāri and a fairly important trade resort. The zamīndāri, save for a few villages to the north-west along the ghāts, lies in the plain, and is almost entirely a rice growing area. The waste land of the plain tract

contains numerous *palās* trees, which yield a large income from lac. The zamīndār owns several mālguzāri villages in the Rāmpaili pargana of the Bhandāra District, and two mālguzāri villages in the Bālāghāt District as well. The zamīndār is literate in Hindī only. He is a Darbāri and *Khās mulākāti* and is exempt under the Arms Act. The estate was taken under management to liquidate a debt of Rs. 35,000 in 1881, but, owing to the quarrels of the zamindar and his brother, management was relinquished.

Bhādra or Baheiā zamīndāri.

86. This estate lies to the extreme south east of the District, partly on a spur of the Satpurā hills, and partly in the plain that reaches from their foot to the lesser Bāgh *Naddī*. The name of the zamīndāri is derived from the Bhādra hill, a square-topped mountain some 2,500 feet high. The forests that lie in the hills are not particularly valuable; just below them, however, and along the Bāgh, are some teak jungles which the zamīndār is doing his best to preserve. The plain villages contain large areas of *palās* scrub jungle which yield a capital lac crop; in the year 1904 it is said that the zamīndār leased his lac crop for Rs. 34,000 Generally the plain tract consists of dark soil. and is highly fertile. The Bāgh and Kharāri irrigation schemes, if executed, will completely protect the tract from famine. The family are trans-frontier Pathāns. The first member of it of whom anything is known was Zainuddin Khān, a *risāldār* of Nāgpur cavalry, who obtained through his friend, Sadāsheo Pant, the Kamaishdar of Lānji, a grant of the tāluk from the Nāgpur Rājā. This was at the close of the 18th century, the tracts having originally formed part of the Kāmtha taluka. The pedigree of the family, so far as it can be ascertained, is as shown on the next page.

Zainuddīn Khān died in 1819, and was succeeded by Mukīm Khān. On his death Gulbībi, widow of Zainuddīn Khān, received the zamīndāri; she died, leaving a granddaughter, married to Minhājuddīn Khān, who came from Afghānistān the ancestral home of the family. The Bhandara Settlement Report describes him as "a poor old man with a retinue of wild Afghān servants." The estate was stated to be deeply indebted and ill-managed by the proprietor. Faizuddīn and Sirājuddīn were jointly in possession until the death of the former. The estate is most prudently managed by the present proprietor Sirājuddīn Khān, who had his son Niazuddīn Khān, (zamīndār of Khujjī in the Raipur District), educated in England and intends, it is said, to do the same for his second son. Sirājuddīn Khān takes much interest in agriculture and works of improvement and supervises his own home farm cultivation with success. He resides at Babelā, a flourishing village on the lesser Bāgh river to the south of the zamīndāri. The main road from Lānji to Amgaon railway station traverses the zamīndāri The zamīndār is literate in Urdū, is a Darbāri and *Khās mulākāti*, and is exempt under the Arms Act. The estate was under management from 1882 to 1892, during which time debts of Rs. 50,500 were paid off.

87. This little estate lies, save for two villages in which proprietary rights have been alienated, on the east of the tongue of hill that juts out between the Deo and Son *Nadīs*, the western sides of

Chauria Zamīndāri.

this mountain peninsula being occupied by Kīnhi. It is most inaccessible, the northern approaches, which are the most level, being cut off by many miles of wild zamīndāri forest from the Bhīmlāt plains, while the other sides are formed by precipitous *ghāts* not easy to climb even on foot. There is some moderate forest, but its inaccessibility renders it nearly valueless. The Bhandāra Settlement Report of 1867 states that the zamīndār told Captain Wilkinson in 1830 that the zamīndāri was given to him by Bālāji Pant, Kamaishdār of Lānji. The present representative states that it was given to the family by Rājā Hirde of Mandlā on *ghātbandī* tenure, for assistance afforded to him on his journey between Mandlā and Lānji. The genealogy of the house is stated to be as below:—

Karan Sai
|
Khem Karan
|
Pahār Singh
|
Gumān Singh
|
Sūrat Singh
|
Galbal Singh
|
Bābu Singh
|
Jhām Singh

The zamindār is indebted to the extent of Rs. 1,176, a serious amount, considering the poverty and smallness of his zamīndāri. He and his brothers live at Jaitpurī; their style of life is just like that of ordinary Gonds and they largely subsist on *shikār* and jungle products, and cultivate by cutting *bewar*. Efforts are being made to arrange some composition with their creditors, but, unless some means of exploiting the zamīndāri forests can be devised, their debts will prove impossible to pay off. The zamīndār, a Gond by caste, claims kinship with the Sarangarh Rājā; he must also be connected with the Rājā of Kawardhā and the zamīndār of Pandaria if his claim be correct. He is barely literate in Hindī. The zamīndār used at one time to manage his own excise. He is a Darbāri and exempt under the Arms Act.

88. This zamīndāri lies almost entirely above the ghāts, on the upper waters of the Deo. Save for a few villages in the comparatively open country round Kīnhi Khās, where the various members of the zamīndāri family live, the whole estate consists of hill and forest. There is not much jungle of any particular value save a patch of *sāl* on the Son river, though there is a little teak forest where the Deo leaves the hills; the upland villages contain a fair amount of *harrā* trees and some bamboos, but constant fires and *bewar* cutting have had their effect, and the forests are inferior even to those of Bhānpur. The family tree is exhibited below:—

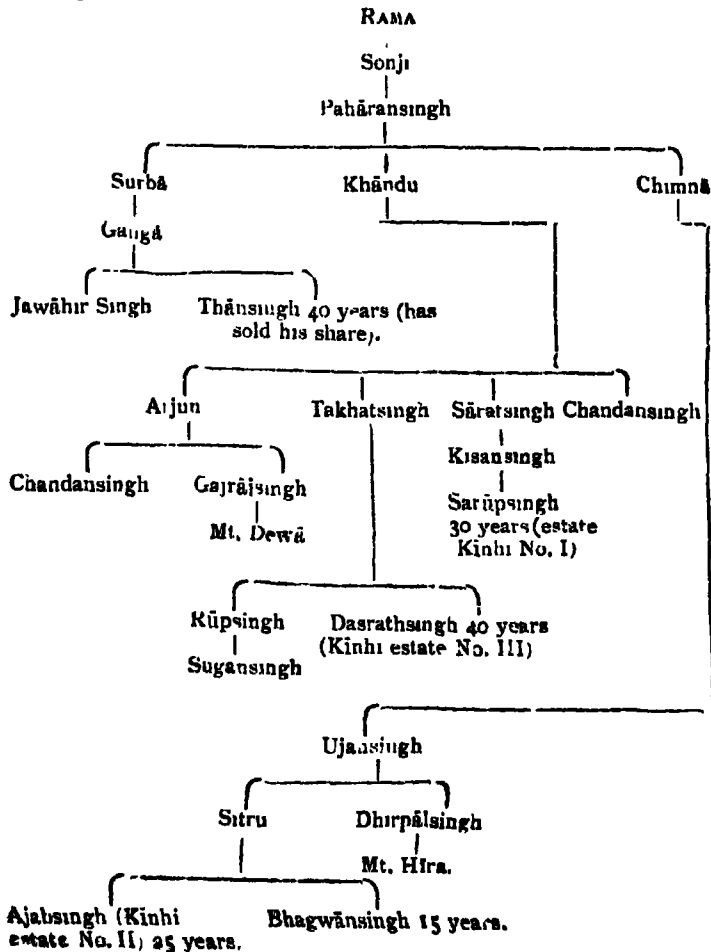
Kīnhi zamīndāri.

The estate is said to have been bestowed on the family by Bakht Buland Shāh, Rājā of Mandlā; the original copper plates bearing the Rājā's *sanad* have however been destroyed by fire. The zamīndārs are Golars by caste, and speak the Golāri language in their own households. An account of how the estate came into their possession, and how it was ultimately divided, is quoted below from Mr. Lawrence's Settlement Report. 'This tenure is comparatively recent. The 'same family hold the tāluk of Chakaheti, tahsīl Bhandāra. 'They are one of the few remnants of the Gaolīs now to 'be found in the land. To Chakaheti, which lies some '60 miles north of Nāgpur, the royal herds used to be sent 'to graze, and this family were, under the Gond and Bhonsla 'sway, the royal herdsmen. As pasture during the hot 'weather was not available at Chakaheti, the herdsmen 'took their cattle to the uplands of Lānji, and, this going 'on year by year, they built sheds, took up a little cultivation, 'and eventually acquired a zamīndāri title. The first zamīndār 'was Pahārsingh, grandfather to Ajarsingh (Ujan Singh), 'who is now the actual representative. They are well-to-do, 'as their assets are large, and their payments small, but 'they in no degree differ from respectable mālguzars nor 'has their treatment been better. The procedure here has 'differed somewhat from that in Sāletekrī and Bhānpur. 'Here partitions have been the rule, and the estate now 'stands completely divided between three branches of the 'family. Three generations back, there were three brothers, 'Surbā, Kemdu and Chimnā, who, finding they could not 'agree, separated. It was a pity this arrangement was not 'then completed, but while Surbā's descendants became mas-'ters of twelve villages and of tāluk Chakaheti, Kemdā and 'Chimnā lived in Kīnhi as an undivided family. The result 'has been constant quarrels and bickerings, ending in appeals 'to the courts and profitless litigation. I have now effected 'a complete partition on the application of the parties and 'while Sūratsingh owns 26 villages, Ajarsingh is master of

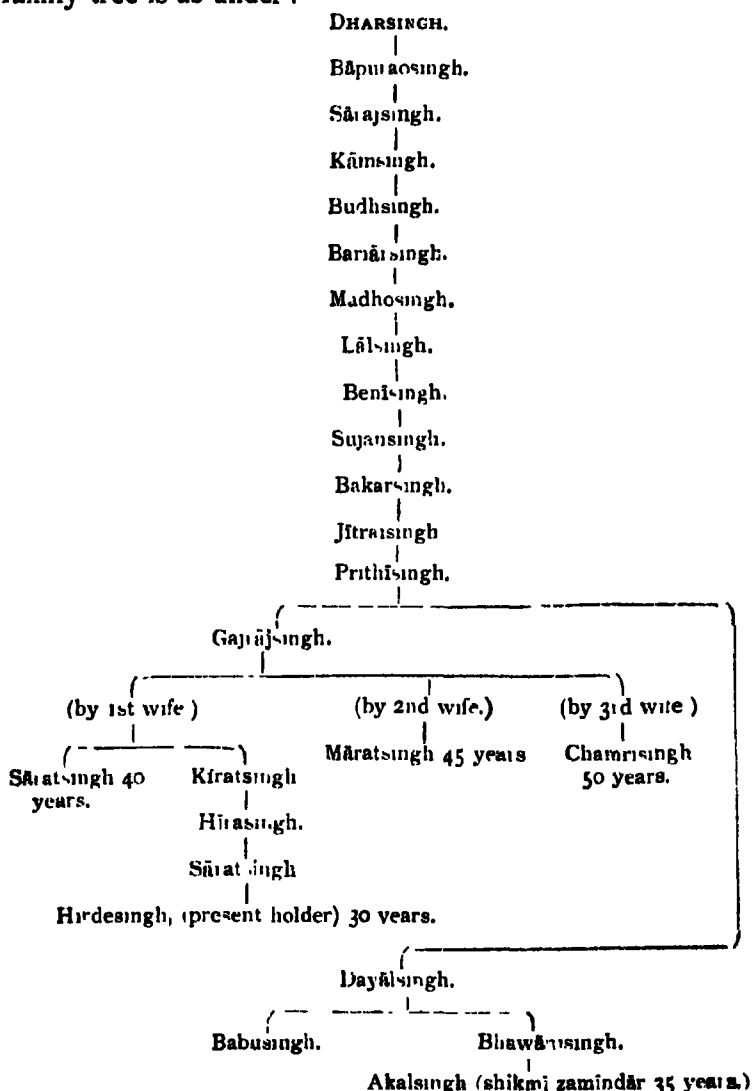
Photo Etching Roorkee College.

CROSSING OF THE DEO RIVER BHANPUR GHAT

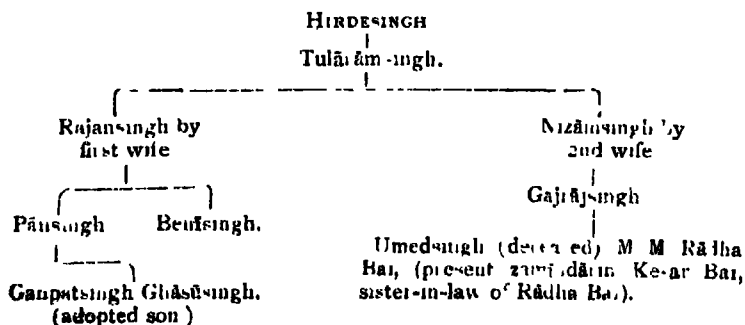
26, one of which is rent-free. They both, as well as the representative of Surbā, are answerable for one-third of the quit-rent.' They are related to the Chakāheti family of Bhandāra and the Chirchirā family of Seonī District. The zamīndāri is held in three estates at present, the names of whose owners are shown in the family tree above; of these Dasrathsingh is illiterate, and Sarūpsingh, Ajabsingh and Bhagwānsingh are literate. Dasrathsingh's and Ajabsingh's estates are (1905) under the Court of Wards for debt. Sarūpsingh's was given up in 1900; he seems a prudent manager. Some of the villages of the old zamīndāri have been sold to a Bālāghat *sahūkār*, to whom they have now passed in māl-guzāri rights. Of the various families, the Kīnhi estate I (see family tree) is out of debt. Kinhi II owes about Rs. 1,200 and Kinhi III about Rs. 500. Sarūpsingh, Dasrathsingh and Ajabsingh are Darbāris.

Bhānpur zamīndāri.

89. This zamīndāri lies mostly above the ghāts, a few of its villages being situated in the open plain along the Deo river; the fine alluvial deposit along its banks renders these very valuable. But by far the larger part of the zamīndāri is situated in the wild and broken country that lies between the Banjar and Son valleys and the south slope of the ghāts. Though the tract is almost entirely under forest, it contains but little timber of value, bamboos and mixed species predominating. There is some *sāl* to the west of the zamīndāri on the edge of the Sāletekrī jungle, and *kattang* bamboos grow along the Deo river, where it leaves the hills through the fine Bhānpur gorge. A rough track traverses the zamīndāri from Bhānpur, where it ascends the ghāt by an aligned route to Sonpurī, near which it meets the Baihar-Bālāghat road. The upland villages, with few exceptions, are peopled by Gonds, who practise a most primitive cultivation. In a large number of cases the ryots have no cattle, and cultivate by cutting down and burning the jungle and sowing seed in the ashes. The forest of these upland tracts was reported some 20 years ago

to be valuable, but constant *bewar* cultivation, concentrated on these areas since the closing of the Government forest, and the depredations of the iron smelters have left practically no timber worth the name. The zamīndāri family are Gonds, connected with the Bījāgarh family. They trace their origin from Partābgarh in the Jubbulpore District and claim connection with the Amlai family there. They are related to the Gandai, Barbaspur and Thākurtolā families of Raipur. The family tree is as under :—

Sujānsingh, by the order of Nizām Sā, the Gond Rājā of Mandlā, captured the then zamīndār of Bhānpur who had rebelled, and received in return the zamīndāri on *ghātbandī* tenure. Pirthīsingh was the first zamīndār of the family who held Bhānpur separately from Bījāgarh. It is stated that the zamīndar of Bargaon, a Rājput, was put in possession of the zamīndāri because Pirthīsingh was in arrears with his *takolī.* The Rājput held the zamīndāri for two years, but found the turbulent hill tribes more than he could manage. Owing to the right of transfer being unrestricted, and to the absence of any system of primogeniture, the family have now lost possession of the whole estate save of the single village of Polā. Three-fourths of the zamīndāri had already been alienated to three Baniās, and the remainder was sold to clear off a debt of Rs. 19,000 due to Rājā Seth Gokuldās. The village of Polā has now been granted on a non-transferable tenure by primogeniture to the present zamīndar, who was also granted a political pension representing the difference between the *takolī* and the mālguzāri revenue of the estate. The *shikmī* zamīndāri of Bhānpur, held by a younger branch of the family, is now partly out of their hands. The estate was once before under management from 1869 to 1878, when it was handed back to the owners with nearly Rs 5,000 in hand. Hirdesingh, the zamīndār, is a Darbāri and exempt under the Arms Act. His relation Hīrāsingh is also exempt.

Bāmhangaon.

90. This little zamīndāri consists of four villages only, lying in the open plain. The family tree is as follows:—

The founder of the family came from Udaipur in Rājputāna. Nizāmsingh assisted the Nāgpur Rājā to capture the Bhānpur zamindār, who had refused to pay tribute. He was given the management of the zamīndāri, but the turbulent Gonds were too much for him, and burned his house. He gave up Bhānpur, and was given a zamīndāri of 7 villages in the plain, of which he lost three villages owing to his complicity in Chimnā Patel's revolt. Umed Singh, the son of Gajrāj Singh, was of bad character, and was for some years a terror to the country side. He was finally convicted of dacoity and received a long sentence. Soon after his return from prison he died. The present holder Kesar Bāi (1905) is indebted to the extent of Rs. 2,500.

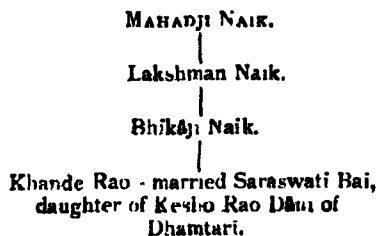
Bargaon.

91. This zamindāri consists of a single village. The present zamīndār, Ganpat Singh of Māte, is exceedingly well-to-do and possesses many other large and valuable mālguzāri villages. His family tree and history will be found in the account of the Bamhangaon zamīndāri.

Mau tāluk.

92. This large and important estate lies partly below and partly above the ghāts in the Balhar tahsīl. The portion of the estate below the ghāts consists of a continuous strip between the ghāts and the Waingangā, from the Nahāra river to the Mandlā border. It is traversed from end to end by the Sātpurā railway. The surface is undulating, plain alternating with hill and jungle, and is peculiarly suited to rice cultivation, abounding with favourable tank sites. Prior to the coming of the railway, the tract was not developed up to its full capacity, owing to its somewhat out-of-the-way position, but, since the line has been built, a keen demand for forest produce has sprung up, and the value of agricultural land has already greatly increased. Schemes for storage tanks and canals to irrigate almost the whole of the tract are under consideration, and when completed, should greatly add to its prosperity. The rest of the estate is situated in the Paras-

wāra and Rūpjhar plateau above the ghāts. The former plateau is open, and comparatively fully cultivated, while the latter is smaller and much of it is still under jungle. Both are traversed by main roads, leading from Baihar to Lāmtha and to Bālāghāt respectively. The value of the land here, owing to the greater difficulty of access, is far less than that of the land lying below the ghāts, but is rapidly rising. The jungle of the estate does not contain many valuable species, and is very incompact, but there is a fair demand for bamboos, fuel, and timber, from that portion of it adjoining the railway line. The history of the tract seems to be as follows:—Much of it was originally held by a Gond zamindāri family, whose representative is now Thākur Bahoran Singh of Tikāri. His ancestors were at constant feud with the Pathān zamīndār of Dhansuā. Under the Marāthā Government the tract came into the possession, first, of a Muhammadan family for a year or two, and then of Lakshman Naik, a Marāthā Kunbi of good family and a commander of Marāthā cavalry. Accounts differ as to how he obtained possession. The Seoni Settlement Report represents him as having been given the tract to settle, and as having successfully colonised it with the Ponwārs from the open country. Other accounts allege that the tract had already been pacified and established by the Rāj-Gond tālukdārs, whose present representatives reside in Tikāri. The Gond family are not mentioned in the *haqiyat misls* of the Mau tract, but the Bhiri settlement record represents the tract as having been given up by Mādho Singh, a Raj-Gond, on account of poverty, and made over to Lakshman Naik five years later. The family tree is as follows:—

MAHADJI NAIK.
|
Lakshman Naik.
|
Bhīkāji Naik.
|
Khande Rao - married Saraswati Bai,
daughter of Kesho Rao Dāni of
Dhamtari.

Saraswati Bai has adopted Gopāl Rao, a lad of some 14 years (1905) and a son of Kesho Rao Dāni, as her heir. Khande Rao was of extravagant and dissolute habits, he received the estate free from debt, and with a substantial cash balance, after a long period of Court of Wards management. At his death the estate owed nearly half a lakh of rupees. Owing to bad seasons and bad management it has proved impossible to pay off this sum out of the income, and an attempt is now being made to clear it off by a sale of a portion of the estate.

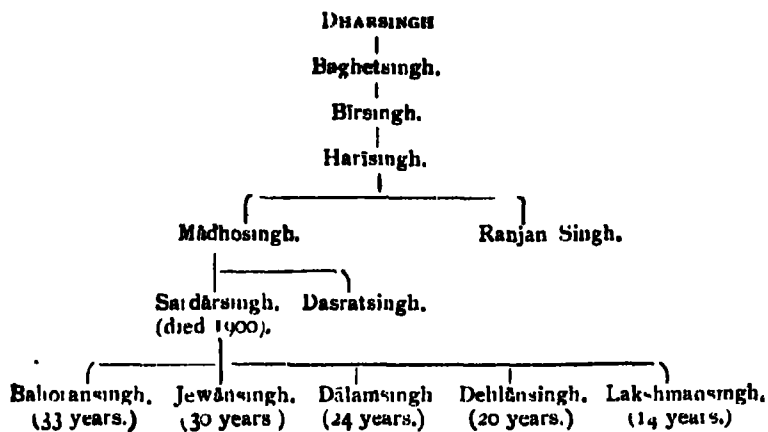
Thok Singh of Garhī.

93. This man, though now only the ryotwāri patel of Garhī, deserves a word of mention as the descendant of the tālukdār of Sijhorā, who once held the whole of Raigarh and a good deal of the adjacent portion of the Mandlā District. There is a somewhat extensive earthen fort at Garhī, which is stated to have been built by his ancestors, who colonised Raigarh with refugees from the Pindāri raids.

Thākur Bahorān Singh of Tikāri.

94. This family at present own but two villages, Tikāri and Keslai, but at the beginning of the nineteenth century they were important Gond tālukdārs. The story goes that Dhārsingh, a resident of Partābgarh, came and took service as a sepoy under Bakht Buland Shāh His only weapon was a wooden sword, which he took good care never to withdraw from its sheath. The Rājā heard of this, and ordered Dhārsingh to cut through a plantain stem (into which an iron bar had been secretly introduced) with his wooden sword; in case of failure he was to be put to death. Returning home in great distress, he told the story to his wife, and by her advice, prayed for help to Devi and Mahādeo, the former of whom appeared to him in a dream and promised him success. Next day, in the presence of numerous spectators, Dhārsingh boldly cut through the plantain, iron bar and all. The Rājā thought that, if this man can do such feats with a wooden sword, what might he not do with one of

iron, and raised him to high honour, giving him the Bhīri Chīni zamīndāri, which is alleged to have included Mau and Paraswāra. It is stated that his son, Baghetsingh, paid *takolī* through the Gond Rājā of Mandlā to the Rājā of Deogarh. The tāluk would thus seem to be one of the tracts conquered by Bakht Buland Shāh, Rājā of Deogarh, from the Mandlā Rāja, and eventually recovered by the latter. In the time of Mādhosingh, Aulād Khān and Umar Darāj Khān, the Musalmān zamīndārs of Dhansuā, used to make frequent raids on the Bhīri territories. On one occasion, when Mādhosingh had been ravaging Dhansuā while the Pathāns were plundering Bhīri, the two parties met just above the Bhondwā ghāt, where a fight ensued in which the Pathāns were totally defeated. A more reliable account however states that the Pathāns were the victors, and the spot where the Gond zamīndār died is still pointed out. There is a fictitious story as to the manner of his death, but the fact that he attempted to escape and was killed seems undoubted. The story of how the tāluk was lost to the family is, that Sardārsingh, when a minor, was entrusted to the guardianship of Lakshman Naik by the Killedār of Mandlā, and Lakshman Naik availed himself of his position to seize the whole territory. The settlement records do not bear out this story, as it is recorded therein that the Bhīri tāluk was surrendered on account of poverty, and taken over by a Brāhman for 5 years, after which it was granted to Lakshman Naik. The present representative of the family, Thākur Bahoransingh, is a Darbīri, well-to-do, and an active and public spirited gentleman. He has been educated up to the upper primary standard. The family tree is as given on page 148.

Dharsingh
Baghetsingh.
Bīrsingh.
Harīsingh.
Mādhosingh.
Ranjan Singh.
Sardārsingh.
(died 1900).
Dasratsingh.
Bahoransingh.
(33 years.)
Jewānsingh.
(30 years)
Dālamsingh
(24 years.)
Dehlānsingh.
(20 years.)
Lakshmansingh.
(14 years.)

## CHAPTER IV.

## AGRICULTURE.

### SOILS.

Soil classes.

95. Nine kinds of soil were separately classed at the last settlement. Their names are *kālī*, *kanhār*, *morand* I, *morand* II, *mutbarrā*, *sihār*, *retārī*, *bardī*, *kachhār*. Their definitions are given below: -

*Kālī*.—Very good *kanhār*, almost entirely free from sand, pebbles or limestone grit. In the whole District only 27 acres of it were recorded, in the north Karolā and Hattā groups, partly in rice and partly in wheat land. The necessity for such a class seems doubtful.

*Kanhār*.—Deep soil of a bluish black colour, usually found in low ground. It is very soft and sticky when wet, and when dry hardens into heavy clods, which can only be broken with difficulty. It is retentive of moisture and contains but little sand, pebbles or limestone grit. An area of 10,613 acres, or 3 per cent of that which was regularly soil-classed at settlement (practically speaking the lowlands of the Bālāghāt tahsīl), is recorded under this soil. Almost all of it lies in the Dhansuā and Hattā groups, and it is nearly all classed as rice land, and bears a second crop.

*Morand*.—Black or brown soil, differing from *kanhār* in being more friable when dry, less retentive of moisture, of a lighter colour and weight, and containing more sand, pebbles or limestone grit. It is ordinarily of a brown colour, but some black-soil fields in which there is a considerable admixture of grit and which are inferior to the ordinary *kanhār*, are classed as *morand* I.

*Morand* II is of a lighter colour than *morand* I and tains more sand, pebbles and limestone grit. Altogether 35,325 acres are classed as *morand* I and 118,477 acres as *morand* II, comprising respectively 10 and 34 per cent of the

soil-classed area. Wheat and gram are usually sown in *morand* soil, which entails far less labour in ploughing at the end of the rains than does the heavy *kanhār*. *Morand* II is a very useful soil; it grows rice nearly as well as *sihār*, is capable of a second crop, and answers well to irrigation. These two soils occur all over the District, though less frequently in the sandy tracts, such as south Karolā.

*Mutbarrā*.—An inferior kind of *morand* II, much mixed with sand and stones. It can grow rice regularly, but does not produce as good a crop as *sihār* does. It very rarely grows wheat, as it dries too rapidly. It can grow a fair second crop of pulses in a good year. An area of 61,145 acres, or 17 per cent of the total, was recorded as containing this soil.

*Sihār* is a light yellow soil, a mixture of clay and fine sand. It cracks little, if at all, when dry. Altogether 91,797 acres or 26 per cent of the total area were classed as *sihār*. This is the rice soil *par excellence*, and is the only one that will grow the finer classes. It is usually incapable of a second crop. It varies a good deal in quality according to its depth and richness. It resembles the *matāsi* of Chhattīsgarh, but is of a coarser consistency. The dust of *matāsi*, when constantly ground down by the passage of carts, is finer than the dust of *sihār*; and *matāsi* is occasionally seen under a second crop of linseed.

*Retāri* is generally found on higher land than *sihār*, of which it is an inferior kind. It contains a large admixture of sand, and is therefore very unretentive of moisture; water rapidly percolates through field banks made of this soil. I can grow light kinds of rice, but is frequently left unembanked and sown with inferior *kharīf* crops. An area of 31,431 acres or 9 per cent of the total is of this class. It is chiefly found to the west of the Waingangā.

*Barrī* is a very poor stony soil, red or yellow in colour, and is rarely found below the ghāts. It is only fit for the very lightest rice and is almost always sown with kodon, kutki and til. It occupies 1507 acres or less than 1 per cent of the total

*Kachhār* is a fine alluvial soil lying along river banks below flood level. It principally consists of silt, with a very small admixture of sand. It nearly always grows wheat or garden crops, such as sugarcane, brinjals, or tobacco. It is usually cut up into very small fields, and is very highly rented, that lying along the Son paying over Rs. 10 an acre. It is principally found along the Son, Deo, and Waingangā. Only 544 acres of this soil were recorded at settlement.

The area for which regular soil classing was not undertaken consists of the Mau tract, and the area above the ghāts. Very little really good black soil exists here. Some very fair black soil is found in Raigarh and in the Jamunia valley. Brown soil is found in the north and south of the Mau valley and in most of the more open parts of the Baihar plateau; *sihār* is found everywhere above the ghāts, though it is not as a rule of the best quality and tends to approximate towards *retān*, which is a very common soil in Baihar. There is very little *sihār* in Raigarh. *Bardī* is very common, and is the prevailing soil in the wilder tracts. *Kachhār* is found along the upper Wainganga.

Position classes.

96. In addition to the soil classes the land was also classed according to position.

The position classes are, first, unirrigated rice land which includes *Samān* or level land, *Tikrā*—High-lying or sloping and *Jhilān* or Low-lying, so that it retains and receives the water of surrounding fields.

Of irrigated land there are the following classes: *Murkhānd* or land receiving an ample and assured water-supply, being irrigated from a channel leading directly to the deepest part of the tank, or, if lying well below the tank, receiving an ample supply of water from percolation, and being in as good a position as if it were irrigated by direct cut The *murkhānd* class is confined to fields protected by a really good tank. Only 9,520 acres were taken as *murkhānd*. *Warsalang* or fields irrigated either from a poor tank or from a high level

channel, or by lift from a nullah or well. As much as 78,897 acres were classed as irrigable in this manner at settlement.

The total area classed as rice land was 237,047 acres, or 68 per cent of the regularly assessed tract.

Wheat land was divided into the following classes:—

*Bandhia*, if the field be embanked with a small bank, *Bandhān*, if with a large bank, *Lawan*, if the field be a good one, lying in a depression, *Dhongar*, if the field lies high and unevenly, *Bharkīla*, if the field be damaged by being cut up by scouring or ravines, and *Mamūli*, for an ordinary field, that has none of the above advantages or disadvantages.

A total of 40,283 acres or 12 per cent of the area was classed as wheat land

*Bāri* or garden land, if irrigated, is called *bāri abpāshi*; if unirrigated, *bāri barāni*, like most of the small house gardens, growing rain crops. A sugarcane field is classed as *sānta bāri*. An area of 10,723 acres or 3 per cent of the total was classed as garden land.

*Mutfarrikāt* includes fields capable of growing minor crops only. Altogether 62,814 acres or 17 per cent were classed as *mutfarrikāt*.

There are two general position classes that can be applied to any of the above; *viz.*, *Khāri*, or near to the village site, with the attendant advantages of ease in working, and a natural supply of manure from men and animals; and *Ulgai*, or exposed to the depredations of wild animals.

Soil factors.

97. The scale of soil factors for the District is shown on page 154 in statement form. The irrigation factors are lower than in the neighbouring District of Bhandāra, owing to the comparative inferiority of the Bālāghāt tanks. In view of the lack of skill in wheat cultivation, the factors for wheat land have been pitched decidedly low. Damage by wild animals is considered to be more severe in *rabi* than in *kharīf* land, and a greater allowance has been made for it in the case of wheat than of rice lands It is probable that these factors do not

fully bring out the value of the better class fields, as is evidenced by the very high rents payable for good *kachhār* land, and from the relation which the irrigation rates that the people are willing to pay bear to the rent; while wheat land in tank beds readily lets for a far higher figure than the factor multiplied by the highest unit-rate for any village in the neighbourhood would give.

Popular idea of the classes of soil.

98. The people generally divide the soils into two classes, heavy and light, called respectively *motā* and *barrā*, into which last class fall *sihār*, *retāri* and *bardī*. Other soils are spoken of as *motā* and *barrā* according as the comparison is made with worse or better soils. If the speaker wishes to be very accurate, he describes them as *chopnā*, *i.e.*, a mixture of *motā* and *barrā*. These intermediate soils are frequently called *morand*, a term of contempt in black soil tracts, and of approval in the yellow soil country. Although this nomenclature is not very detailed, the differences in value of the various kinds of soil are readily admitted by the people, though opinions may differ as to their precise degree.

| Class of soil. | | RICE LAND | | | | | WHEAT LAND. | | | | | | | GARDEN LAND. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | IRRIGABLE INCLUDING CANE LAND | | BARANI (DRY). | |
| | | Sanān | Tikrā. | Jhilān | Waisalang. | Mamuli. | Bandhia. | Bandhān. | Mānjli | Lawan | Dhongar. | Bharkila. | Inferior crops. | Ordinary. | Khāri. | Ordinary. | Khāri. |
| Kachhār | ... | .. | .. | . | . | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | .. | ... | ... | 65 | 70 | ... | ... |
| Kāli | ... | 50 | .. | 56 | 60 | 62 | 45 | 50 | 40 | 45 | ... | ... | ... | 60 | 65 | 40 | 50 |
| Kanhār | . | 44 | ... | 52 | 55 | 66 | 36 | 44 | 32 | 36 | 24 | 20 | ... | | | | |
| Morand I | .. | 34 | 20 | 40 | 44 | 54 | 32 | 40 | 28 | 32 | 20 | 16 | ... | 55 | 60 | 26 | 40 |
| Morand II | .. | 28 | 18 | 35 | 37 | 48 | 28 | 36 | 24 | 28 | 16 | 14 | 14 | | | | |
| Mutbarrā | ... | 19 | 12 | 27 | 28 | 38 | 20 | 27 | 16 | 20 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 45 | 50 | 16 | 30 |
| Sihār | .. | 22 | 12 | 29 | 31 | 44 | ... | .. | .. | .. | ... | ... | 8 | | | | |
| Retāri | .. | 11 | 6 | 19 | 20 | 23 | ... | ... | ... | | ... | ... | 4 | 35 | 40 | 10 | 20 |
| Bardī | ... | 6 | 4 | ... | ... | .. | | ... | . | ... | .. | ... | 3 | | | | |

REMARKS.

For *khāri* in rice and minor crop lands add the following percentages:—

| | |
|---|---|
| Kāli, Kanhār, Kachhār, Morand I | ... 25 |
| Morand II | ... 33⅓ |
| Sihār, Mutbarrā | ... 50 |
| Bardī and Retāri | ... 60 |

For *Ulgas* deduct 33 per cent in the case of rice and minor crop lands, and 50 per cent in the case of wheat land.

## STATISTICS OF CULTIVATION.

General statistics of cultivation.

99. The total village area in 1904-05 was—

| | | Acres. |
|---|---|---|
| Khālsa | ... | ... 830,286 |
| Zamīndāri | ... | ... 585,740 |
| | Total | ... 1,416,026 |

The area in 1893-94, when survey had been completed, was 1,465,119 acres; but, owing to afforestation and the transfer of areas to other Districts on the one hand, and to disforestations on the other, this area has varied in almost every year. The total unoccupied area in 1895-96 when the District was in its most prosperous state was 903,671 acres; this rose to 934,359 acres in 1897-98; but has since declined in 1904-05 to 848,687 acres. It must be remembered, however, that large areas of unoccupied land were transferred to Mandlā in 1904. Of the unoccupied area in 1904-05, 241,865 acres were under tre[illegible]is includes the large forest areas in the zamīndāris, much of which is recorded as *fāsil mahāl.* The area under crop in that year was—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Khālsa | ... | ... 321,387 |
| Zamīndāri | ... | ... 103,610 |
| | Total | ... 424,997 |

The corresponding area in 1900-01 was 343,604 for a population of 325,371 persons, or 1·06 acres per head. In 1891 the population was 382,240, and the area under crop 396,341 acres, an average of 1·04 acres per person. The present population is probably not much above that of 1901, because of the intervention of one or two bad seasons, and the constant drain of the labouring classes towards the Berārs. Assuming that the present population is 355,000, this allows (1904-05) 1·12 cropped acres per person. There is a

great complaint of the shortage of labour everywhere; and the difference that these figures show from those of 1891 and 1901 goes to justify it.

The area under new fallow at the 30 years' settlement was 10,543 acres against an area under crop of 334,119, or just under 3 per cent. In 1891-92 the areas were respectively 28,093 and 396,341 acres, or about 7 per cent; in 1901-02, 90,117 and 387,717 acres or 23 per cent; in 1904-05, 75,155 and 424,997 acres or 18 per cent. Allowing for the extension of cultivation to the poorer soils, the percentage of 1893-94, when cropping reached its maximum, *viz.*, 18 per cent, is probably the normal one. The old fallow area, which was 11,331 acres in 1891-92, had risen to 67,937 in 1903-04, its highest figure so far. Much of this was under permanent cultivation in prior years, and will be so again. The occupied area steadily rose until 1893-94 when it reached its highest point at 555,113 acres; its lowest was 511,234 acres in 1897-98; in 1904-05, it stood at 567,339, which is above the figure for 1893-94, but includes a far larger area of fallow. Rice cultivation requires few, if any, resting fallows, nor do any of the soils in the District, save *sihār*, *retāri* and *bardī*, when sown with one or other of the crops below:—

| Name of crop. | | Area in 1904-05. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kodon-kutkī ... | ... | 73,820 | |
| Til ... | ... | 1,896 | |
| Jagnī, etc. ... | ... | 900 | estimated |
| Kulthā and popat | ... | 16,000 | estimated |
| Total | ... | 92,616 | |

Practically no *rabi* crops need resting fallows. The crops mentioned above are often sown in soil that needs no resting fallows; and it is probable that only one-third of the above area, or about 30,000 acres, will be incapable of continuous cropping. Adding 5,000 acres as an estimated

figure for light rice grown on hillsides, it is probable that not much more than 35,000 acres of land cropped in any one year need resting fallows. The fallows so given vary in length from one year to four or five years; by the wandering tribes of Baihar, millet crops are often taken off a field for 3 or 4 years in succession; and then it is abandoned for ever, or at any rate until enough wood grows on it again to furnish ashes for manure, so that much of it figures in our records as village waste. Allowing 3 years on an average, this would give 105,000 acres of old and new fallow required for cropping purposes, against a total in 1904-05 of 142,342 acres; but it is not likely that more than about a half of the fallow area is retained in occupation.

Area under different crops.

100. The area under rice at the 30 years' settlement was 247,100 acres; this rose to 341,011 acres, its highest point, in 1893-94, when the area under the lesser millets, the crop which poverty of resources usually causes to be substituted for rice, was 46,220 acres. The rice area sank in 1899-00 to 190,646 acres mainly because the shortness of rainfall did not allow of transplantation, so that the reduction is not a measure of the weakened resources of the District. In 1904-05, it rose again to 251,262 acres, while the area under the lesser millets was 73,820 acres. A considerable portion of the area once under rice is now under minor crops or lying fallow. The area under wheat at the 30 years' settlement was 30,437 acres, although the cropping figures for that year are not in all cases reliable; it stood at 32,500 acres in 1892-93. Since then, however, it has steadily declined, till in 1904-05 it stood at 17,260 acres only. Unfavourable sowing seasons in 1899-00 and 1902-03 reduced it for the time to far lower figures. The decrease in the area under wheat and gram that occurred after 1892-93 in Raigarh, once an important wheat-growing tract, is accounted for by the severe visitation of rust in the uplands during that and the following year; the subsequent decline of other crops in the rest of the Dis-

trict is due to two causes, first to the bad seasons inducing cultivators to sow crops with cheaper seed, and next, to the inferiority of the local methods of *rabi* cultivation. The fluctuations of most other *rabi* crops have followed those of the double-cropped area, which, in its turn, depends directly on the character of the September rains. Rejecting the figures of the 30 years' settlement as unreliable, the maximum area under two crops was reached in 1893-94, *viz.*, 135,707 acres. The series of dry years that followed reduced it to 102,912 acres in 1895-96; in 1896-97 a failure of the September rains caused a drop to 29,584 acres; in 1898-99 a favourable monsoon caused it to expand again to 100,698 acres. In 1899-00 it reached its lowest point of 13,012 acres, and in 1904-05 it rose to the figure of 104,365 acres again.

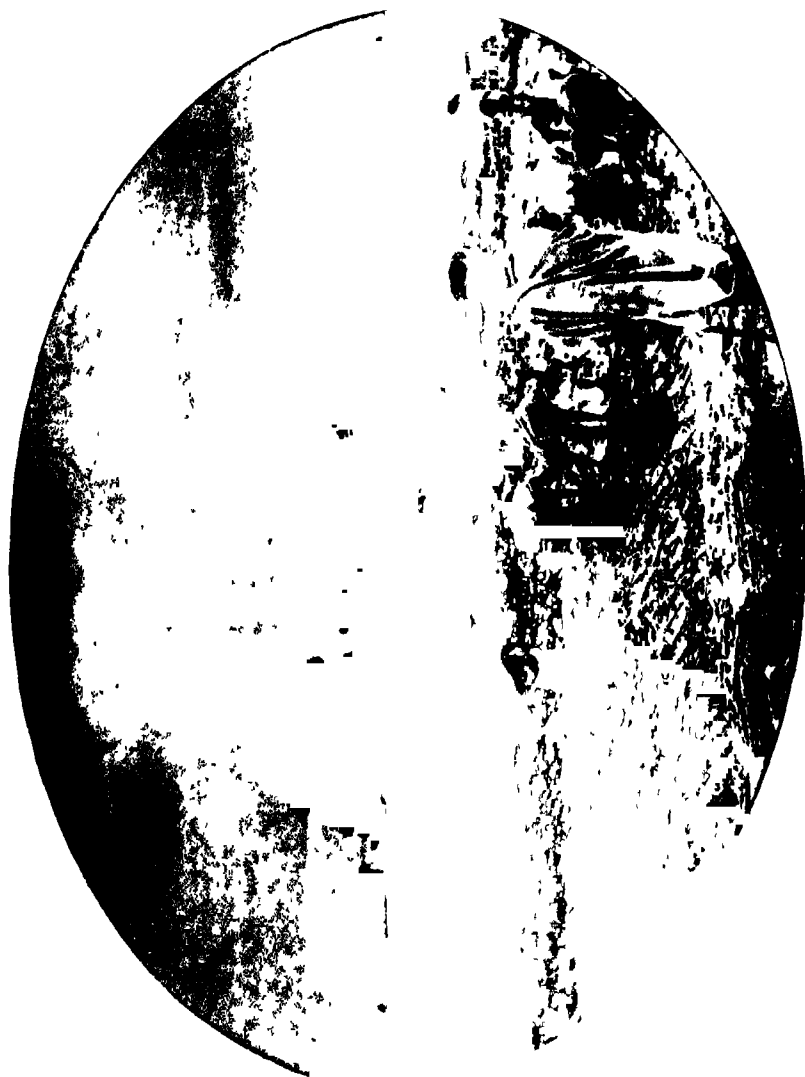
CROPS.

Rice cultivation.

101. By far the most important crop of the District is rice (*Oryza sativa*). The area under this crop during the year 1904-05 was as follows: —

| | Transplanted. | | Broadcast. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Irrigated. | Dry. | Irrigated. | Dry. |
| Khālsa ... | 33,021 | 94,139 | 5,651 | 60,849 |
| Zamīndāri | 7,937 | 19,361 | 2,637 | 27,667 |
| Total ... | 40,958 | 113,500 | 8,288 | 88,516 |
| Grand Total | 251,262 | | | |

There are three systems of rice sowing; *viz.*, *parhā* or *rohnā* by transplanting; *kaorak* or *lehī*, by previous germination, and *botā* or *boār*, by broadcast sowing direct.

Transplanting is the system usually pursued; it is said to give a larger outturn and grain of superior quality and

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RICE TRANSPLANTATION.

flavour, and to be indispensable for the best kinds of rice. Broadcasting is usually practised in black soil, where transplanting is more difficult than in light soil, and where early ripening varieties are sown, to enable a second crop to be reaped. It is also adopted when a season of short rainfall is feared, or when the skill or resources of the tenants are not equal to attempting transplantation; this is often the case with aboriginal cultivators in jungly tracts. *Kaorak* is seldom practised in an ordinary year. The Bhandāra Settlement Report states that it is done when the weather has made sowings very late; it is not uncommon in the sandy villages near the Deo and Son rivers. It is most usually resorted to when there has been a very heavy rainfall, which has prevented the nurseries from being sown.

The following is a description of the various methods.

Transplanting.

102. A small area varying from 5 *kuros*[1] to 1 (*bhātia*) *khandī* (about one-tenth to two-fifths of an acre) seed capacity is selected as the nursery (*khar*). This will suffice to plant on an average four times its own area, including the nursery itself. The nursery is sown by the usual method adopted for all *kharīf* crops. Before sowing it is cultivated twice with a *nāgar* or narrow-bladed plough. A scarifier or *bakhar* is not used in light soil till a plough has twice been over the ground, so that the scarifier is not used for rice nurseries unless the land has been already ploughed up by the plough in the cold or hot weather. The manure consists of cowdung, and before the application of this, straw, or near the jungle twigs and branches, are often spread over the nursery and burned. When the rain falls, this is ploughed into the ground, and the *datāri* or harrow worked over the land to break up the clods. Seven or eight cartloads per *khandī* of seed capacity, (about half an acre of nursery area) is considered a full manuring. Mālguzārs with a large home-

[1] Bhatia kuro = 5½ seers.
Bhātia khandi = 109 seers.

farm have to start their manuring a month or so before the rains break. Tenants seldom sell their manure, but labourers will exchange their sweepings for a cartload or two of fuel. Manure is not always or even usually given to any part of the field besides the nursery. It always pays a cultivator to have as large a nursery as he can, to save trouble in carrying the seedlings from one field to another. The site of the nursery has to be changed every year, otherwise, it is said, the soil gets too much worked up where the nursery has been and becomes too loose, so that, when a cultivator has only a small amount of land in one place, he is obliged to sow only a small nursery For *parhā* about one *bhātia khandī* (109 seers) of seed will transplant into 2·55 acres of light soil; for broadcasting, as the area is not so well covered, the rate is 7 or 8 *kuros* (about 40 seers) an acre, and the same area of black soil will take one or two *kuros* more. A transplanted field can be easily told even after reaping, as the plants tiller far more than if sown broadcast, and the ground is more free from weeds. The nursery, after ploughing, manuring, and clod crushing is completed, is cleaned of weeds by women with sickles. Two women can clear an average-sized nursery in one day, for which they get 4 *suriyās*, or rather less than 1½ seers of grain each. The seedlings in 20 or 25 days grow to a foot in height, when they are fit for transplanting. Meantime the remaining area is ploughed again and left for a week, the banks being repaired to make them hold water. The harrow is used to break up clods, for which purpose it is turned upside down. In this position it is called a *pattā* or *mahi*. The plough and the harrow are used twice each, by which time the surface consists of a smooth and creamy mud. This process is known as *chīkal machāna*. Heavy rain just before transplantation spoils the consistency of the mud, and it has to be ploughed up again. The seedlings are uprooted from the nursery and stuck into the mud in bunches of about three or five, mostly by women. They lie flat for a day or two and then stand upright, except where there is very heavy rainfall,

when they lie and rot: *gārā khā gayā* (the mud has eaten it), says the unfortunate cultivator. The crop later in the season looks miserably stunted and scarcely ears: while surrounding fields contain a full crop. The seedlings are carried in headloads in the case of small tenants, but on a *khirrī* or sled drawn by buffaloes, where cultivation is more extensive. The banks have to be broken to allow of the *khirrī* being drawn through them. The men when planting, sit with their feet on small stools known as *ghorī*; the women seldom do this, as they are said to be more used to continuous sitting and stooping than men. If things go well, the transplanting for the District should be over in a month. The daily wages for transplantation are said to have risen to from one anna before the 1896 famine to 1½ annas in 1905. The presence of manganese mines often forces up rates to a rupee for 5 days. One person can transplant one *bhātta kuro* (about ⅛th of an acre) in a day. It is not so easy to transplant in black soil as in *sihār*, as the seedlings neither come out so readily nor are they so readily stuck in. The actual work of transplanting is always done by daily labour, the cultivator himself being fully engaged in preparing the ground. In this District, transplantation wage rates are always expressed in terms of days per rupee; and payments are made in rupees: thus there is not the heavy demand for copper during the rains that has to be met in other parts of the Province.

Broadcasting and other methods.

103. Broadcasting is done after the fields have had one ploughing. After the seed is sown, the harrow is drawn over the field to cover it up. The nurseries are sown first, next the broadcast rice, then the kodon and lighter crops. Broadcast cultivation is much cheaper than transplanting, as there is no labour needed for the former that is not required for the latter; while the latter takes more ploughing to start with, and there is also the very expensive transplanting, which costs nearly a rupee an acre. If the plants are grown too close together, it is said to result in a disproportionate amount

of chaff. Weeding is always necessary for broadcast, and often for transplanted rice. The cost of weeding varies, being at the rate of one or one and a half annas a day, or a *kuro* of grain for a *khandī* (1⅔ acres) of land. A man can weed 4 *bhātia kuros* (about half an acre) in a day on an average, though the hardness of the work varies according to the season and the kind of soil.

*Kaorak.*—This is performed by steeping the seeds in a heap of hot cowdung or in warm water, till they have sprouted. They are then broadcasted over a carefully prepared and perfectly smooth muddy surface, like that prepared for transplantation. Heavy rainfall too soon after sowing damages them ; and they have to be guarded from birds for a day or two. *Kaorak* gives a very clean tilth, though not so large a yield as broadcast.

*Biāsi* is practised largely in upper Sāletekrī, east Bhīmlāt and Raigarh, and is known to, and occasionally practised by, tenants in other parts of the District, but the system is so entirely peculiar to Chhattīsgarh, and relatively so unimportant here, that no account of it is attempted, further than to state that the land is ploughed in August at right-angles to the direction of the furrows of the last ploughing before the crop was sown, to thin and partially to uproot the seedlings.

Repairing of embankments.

104. Rice embankments are mended whenever repairs are needed, but the regular mending operations are undertaken, if in yellow soil, in the rains, when brick-like slabs are cut out of the field with the *chatwār* or wooden spade and built on to the bank ; in black soil large clods are dug up and heaped together in the hot weather. These subside when soaked with rain and form a much wider bank than in the case of yellow soil. Pigeon pea (*Cajanus indicus*), *popat* (*Dolichos lablab*) and sesamum are sown on black soil banks, and the last named also on newly repaired banks of yellow soil. The owner of each field is bound by local custom to repair the embankments at the lower side of his field, when it borders on the fields of other owners. The Bālāghāt Tahsīl Report

states, that on an average, each acre of *kanhār*, *morand* and *sihār* land is divided into two, six and eight small fields respectively, excluding large *gatiyās* or tank-like embankments, and the average length of embankment per acre is 8½, 17½ and 20½ chains respectively. The cost of embankment at 844 feet per rupee is stated to be Rs. 6, Rs. 8-3 and Rs. 7-3 per acre of *kanhār*, *morand* and *sihār* respectively. To level the inequalities in rice fields a two-toothed harrow is used pulled by buffaloes, which, when the fields are wet and full of mud, drags the earth from one side of the field to the other. It is called a *kopar*.

Reaping.

105. The lightest kinds of rice are reaped from the first week in September, and cutting goes on till well into December, when the finer kinds are reaped The rate is 4 *suriyās* (about 1½ seers of paddy) or six *paisā* a day. Three women can reap a plough (7 acres) of *sihār* land in 10 or 11 days. The crop, when cut, is spread out in the sun to dry for a day or two. It is then stacked at the threshing floor, which is situated close to the cultivator's fields. When he has reaped all his rice and stacked it, he begins to thresh it. Seven bullocks are usually fastened in a row from a post (*merh*) in the middle of the threshing floor. The biggest bullock, called *merhia*, is put in the centre next the post, and the smallest and fastest, called *pheriyā* (Chhattisgarhi *pakaria*), on the outside. When the threshing is done, the grain is stored at home, and the straw is twisted up into rolls (*beat*), for convenience of transport to the tenant's yard.

Varieties of rice.

106. The kinds of rice are exceedingly numerous, and it would be impossible to attempt a description of all of them. The higher grade, and therefore slower ripening kinds, are grown in the fields that command the most assured and continuous supply of water; the lighter and earlier ripening the kind, the poorer and more exposed the field it is sown in. If a light rice were sown in a swampy field it would be ruined by excess

of moisture, while heavy rice in a high-lying field would not get water enough to ripen it, and would wither. The best kind of rice sown in the District, and probably anywhere in the Central Provinces, is *chinnūr*. Of this there are three grades, differing in quality. The best *chinnūr* requires a rich, deep, and well watered *sihār*, free from stones, such as is found in the villages of Kaidī and Lendejhirī: in these villages the tank water-supply is so good that famine is practically unknown, and the seed never gets wiped out in a bad year; it is carefully hand-picked every year. *Chinnūr* tends to get coarse and lose flavour if sown in black soil, and also if sown on the colder Baihar plateau. It is a fine slender grain, particularly valued for its perfume and flavour, and in 1905 sold at Rs. 15 or 16 a *lambari khandī* (148 seers), when other rice stood at Rs. 8 or 10 a *khandī*. Its yield is said to be rather lower than that of the medium kinds. Another very high grade rice, called *Haidarābādi*, is grown beneath the large tank of Moaria in the Mau pargana. the seed is said to have been brought from the Deccan by the present patel's father. It is a very long-grained rice, and is said to be even later ripening than *chinnūr*. The only other kinds equal to these two are *gurarkot* and *māhuldetī*. All these kinds are cut well after the beginning of December. *Chinnūr* is sometimes on the ground as late as the 20th December. The next grade comprises *piso*, *selo*, *ramkher*, *tedi*, and *ganjakalli* which are cut late in November or early in December. *Piso* and *ganjakalli* are reddish rices The third grade consists of *uraibuttā*, *pāndri* and *chiprā*. There are two kinds of *uraibuttā*, the heavy being only just lighter than *piso*, it is cut in mid-November The fourth grade contains *raghunāth* and *chitārkothi*, (red); it is cut in October. The last and lightest grade includes *kakerī* and *sāthia*, which are cut at the time of the *Gaur* festival or mid-September. These kinds are grown in very poor high-lying fields, and yield fairly well in a year of good rainfall, but there are many years in which their outturn is

practically *nil*. Besides these there are other special kinds, such as *roti*, a red rice, used for making cakes, as it is too brittle and floury to boil, and *ponghā*, a very free yielding rice, which has a long hollow stem, and grows in very deep water where any other kind of rice would rot. *Urathullā* and *piso* are the best classes of rice which are usually grown in black soil.

The District standard yield per acre is 1,600 lbs., which is roughly tenfold; in good fields the yield of rice of the *piso* class rises as high as 3,000 lbs. and more, while outturns of 2,000 lbs. and upward are common. Against this there must be taken the unfortunately rather numerous years of crop failure, and the large areas of poor broadcast rice in Baihar and even in the plains. The very low grade rices do not often yield more than sevenfold or about 600 lbs. Mr. Scott, in his Settlement Report, after a consideration of 352 experimental harvestings from 1892 to 1898, came to the conclusion that a fair average was 1,500 and 980 lbs. respectively for transplanted and broadcast rice in the Bālāghāt, and 1,100 lbs. and 750 lbs. in the Baihar tahsīl. Considering that these years were with hardly any exceptions below the normal, this figure seems too low and the District standard of 1,600 lbs. in a normal year is certainly not too high In the famine of 1897, for lack of local seed, several Bengal varieties were introduced, but, being unknown to the local cultivators, were as a rule sown in too high-lying fields, and proved a failure. Seed-grain two years old will do for sowing, though new seed is best; grain of 3 years old is quite unfit for seed, as it germinates very imperfectly. The people experiment on seed, the quality of which they suspect, by germinating a few grains before sowing. Cultivators are careful to keep all the different kinds of rice in separate bins. Mixed rice (or *kabrā* as it is called) is only used for food, though grainlenders who are not so careful in this respect as mālguzārs and tenants, often give it out for seed to their unfortunate clients, who have to accept it. Before sowing the nurseries (*khār barhnā*), the rice seed is picked over, and

small and damaged grains removed; the waste grain is known as *badrā*, and is used for feeding fowls and similar purposes, and sometimes for food. Cleaned rice (*chāwal*) deteriorates in flavour in a month or two; partially cleaned rice or *bagar*, the usual form in which rice is exported, keeps good for six months. Rice is usually exported to Bīna and Jubbulpore in the form of *bagar*, but the inhabitants of Bengal who make their *chāwal* by the *osnā* process require *dhān* in spite of the extra cost of carriage. Paddy is said by Mr. Mayne to be good commercially for two years, but it is probably quite fit for eating for much longer. New rice is unpleasant to eat, as it is very soft after boiling.

Enemies of rice.

107. The rice crop is liable to the attacks of the following insects:—

*Berlī* or *Bedī*, a caterpillar of a moth (*Nymphula depunctalis*), that lives in the rolled up rice leaves. It usually appears in September but is often found earlier. It is specially liable to attack late rice, standing in water under a hot sun. The leaves and upper part of the stem turn white. The local remedies are, either the mixing of leaves of the *Lebidieropsis orbicularis* or the resin of *bījāsāl* (*Pterocarpus Marsupium*) with the water, or the drawing off of the water. *Sāwardehī* is a caterpillar that usually appears on the rice in years of insufficient rainfall. They seem to increase greatly when the rains are late and to be destroyed by a heavy fall. They are the caterpillars of the moth *Cirphis unipuncta*, and are smooth in appearance. Other insects that are injurious to rice are the *ghorī* or *Cantharis* beetle, and the *uktā* (*Nonagria uniformis*). The only other serious pest to rice is the *Machī andā*, a kind of grass with a number of little globular seeds that spoils rice fields, but it is distinctly local in distribution.

Double cropping.

108. Closely connected with the subject of rice is that of second cropping. This is usually practised by the *utāra* method, or by sprinkling the seed broadcast in mud or water among the standing rice in the month of September. Sometimes, however,

the fields are ploughed up after the rice is reaped, and the seed sown in the tilled ground (*kāwl*). The earlier the rice is reaped, the better the *utāra*, as the presence of the rice stunts the second crop, which grows very rapidly when the rice is cut. The crops usually sown in *utāra* are linseed, peas, urad (*Phaseolus radiatus*), and the chickling vetch (*Lathyrus sativus*) known locally as *lākhorī*. Urad seed is steeped for a day or two in water and then sown in mud; linseed also is sown in mud; the chickling vetch is sown in water, which should be allowed to remain in the field for several days after sowing. In Katangī, the chickling vetch is sown in the fields whose soil is the richest; in most other parts of the District, these fields are devoted to urad, which is interspersed with irregular rows of linseed. *Lākhorī* and linseed are commonest in Katangī, Karolā and Lānji; urad in Dhansuā, Hattā and Kirnāpur. The area double cropped in 1904-05 was 104,365 acres. As a rule, if a field is very retentive of water, it is ploughed before sowing. This method of cultivation is called *nāgri*. All crops give a better yield in *nāgri* if that method of cultivation is possible. Wheat, gram, masūr, and safflower are never sown in *utāra*, but always in *nāgri*. *Nāgri* is more common after broadcast than after transplanted rice, as the late ripening rices leave no time for subsequent cultivation.

*Bewar* cultivation.

109. The only remaining important *kharīf* crops are kodon, kutkī and their congeners. These crops usually get a very inferior tilth. One ploughing and one harrowing are enough. As soon as the rice sowing is completed, the millets are sown. The following are the principal methods:—

*Bewar*.—Here no plough is used at all. The jungle on a hillside is felled in January or February and is allowed to dry through the hot weather. Just before the rains it is burned; the soil is lightly dressed with the axe and the seed sown in the ashes. This method is still practised in a few jungly and almost inaccessible villages in the upper zamīndāris, but it has been forbidden in every village where a plough can be worked with

any success. It need not be said that it is absolutely ruinous to the forest. The following description of the process is by Colonel Bloomfield:—'It may be interesting to note the 'statistics of *bewar* cultivation. One ablebodied man can 'clear sufficient land to sow about 1 *kuro* of seed, which, if 'the season be propitious, will produce from 10 to 15 *khandīs* 'of unhusked grain. Leaving out the value of the man's 'labour, the cost of the process will be one-sixth of the cost 'of the axe, about 8 pies or one penny, and 1 or 1½ anna '(about two pence), the ordinary value of the seed grain, 'making a total cost of about three pence. The produce, 'taken at 10 *khandīs*, would, if sent to market, in ordinary 'years sell for about Rs. 10[1]; but if kept for home use would 'more than suffice for the support of one man. Thus one man 'would ordinarily consume 4 *suriyās* uncleaned (or 2 *suriyās* 'cleaned) kutkī per diem, so that one *kuro* would last him 'for 3 days, or one *khandī* 60 days, or 6·032 *khandīs* would 'last out the calendar year of 365 days. At the end of the 'year he would have 3 *khandīs* 18 *kuros* and 4 *suriyās* for 'seed or sale, supposing none had been consumed by his 'family. But supposing he had supported a family (say 'wife and child) during the year, the produce of his *bewar* 'would not apparently be sufficient. Then to his agricultural 'earnings must be added whatever he can get together by 'the sale of jungle produce, lac, *harrā*, wax, etc., etc., in the 'neighbouring bazars From what I have seen and heard 'I am inclined to believe that the *bewar* cutting life of the 'Gonds and Baigās is the least laborious that can be ima-'gined, and I can hardly wonder that the wild people who 'now subsist by it should hesitate before descending to the 'plains and adopting a more civilised mode of life. For 'whatever may be said against this semi-wild style of exist-'ence, there is no doubt that during the past ten months 'of scarcity and high prices, while the poorer classes in the 'plains have been hard pressed and pinched for food, the

[1] This year it is worth Rs 20, 30 or even 40.

'Gonds and Baigās of the wilder parts have been as happy 'and contented as usual. Such, I believe, was the state of 'the wild tribes at the time of the Orissa famine, and I well 'imagine that, were the *bewar* crops to fail entirely, the 'wilder Gonds and Baigās would manage to eke out an 'existence on the fruits of the forest. There is scarcely 'a hill or high place in the whole District, which does 'not bear unmistakeable signs of having been once sub-'jected to the operation of the *bewar* cutter's axe. Here 'and there a clump of large trees towers above the sur-'rounding jungle, where, since the place was cleared, 'the various kinds of trees and bamboos have all grown 'up together in one mass. Viewed from a distance the 'place now has a smooth and unbroken appearance. After 'a hillside has once been cleared for *bewar*, it is not consi-'dered again fit for cultivation, until some ten or twelve years 'have elapsed, when the jungle is held by the *bewar* cutters 'to be sufficiently heavy to answer their purposes. It there-'fore seldom happens that one man in his life time cuts his '*bewar* more than 3 or 4 times in one place.'

Other aboriginal methods.

110. The ordinary method practised by the aborigines in the more open parts of the Baihar tahsil is not greatly dissimilar. The jungle is cut and burnt and the soil ploughed up. This gives fairly good crops for some three or four years; after which that field is left alone until the jungle has grown enough to burn well. Gonds often give as the reason for the sudden increase of cultivation in a village, that it had been long deserted and the jungle had grown well. Much of the land under this wasteful method of cultivation is *sihār* or level *retāri*, and if embanked could grow fair rice, but the Gond prefers less laborious methods.

Cultivation of millets in civilised tracts.

111. The third style of cultivation is the ordinary one in vogue in the more civilised tracts, where kodon (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*) is grown sometimes alone, sometimes

with sesamum or pigeon pea in the poorer fields, like any other *kharīf* crops. *Mandia* (*Eleusine corocana*) is cultivated somewhat more carefully than other millets; it is usually grown near the village site and is transplanted, often into regular lines. The yield of these crops is high in proportion to their seed, ranging as high as 40 or 50 fold. The District standard is 350 lbs. for kodon. The area under the lesser *kharīf* crops was in 1904-05 as under:—

| Crop. | Acres. |
|---|---|
| Kodo-Kutkī ... ... | 73,820 |
| *Mandia* ... ... ... | 3,284 |
| Maize ... ... ... | 6,833 |
| Early urad, etc. ... ... | 5,264 |
| Juār ... ... ... | 1,738 |
| Juār-tūr ... ... ... | 6,556 |

Oilseeds.

112. The oilseeds are very unimportant in this District. Sesamum only covered the following area :—

| | Acres. |
|---|---|
| Rabi ... ... ... | 450 |
| Kharif ... ... ... | 1,896 |

'Other oil seeds' which heading chiefly includes *jagni*. (*Guizotia abyssinica*) occupied 984 acres. Sesamum and *jagnī* are almost always sown on poor light land; and the former is principally found on field banks.

Sugarcane.

113. Sugarcane is not a very important crop. It covered the following area in 1904-05:—

| | |
|---|---|
| Irrigated ... ... | 1,543 acres. |
| Unirrigated ... ... | 18 ,, |

The area at the 30 years' settlement was 4,075 acres, its subsequent decline is mainly due to its *gur* having been undersold by the United Provinces *gur*. The imported *gur* sells at 4½ to 5 seers per rupee, a price which does not encourage the production of the local article. The very low figure of 937 acres reached in 1900-01 was due to bad seasons, and

the present figure represents the normal area. It is probable that this crop, save when grown to eat raw, will entirely disappear at no distant date, unless improved methods are introduced. The only means of reviving the industry seems to be to induce the growth of large areas, thoroughly protected by permanent irrigation, round a central mill; the resulting economy will probably enable the local cane to hold its own.

The two principal varieties in the District are *kathai*, a small thin hard cane grown west of the Waingangā and in Dhansuā and Hattā, and the *khushiār* or heavy cane grown in the Lānji tract. Of this last there are several varieties such as *dhaurī* (white), *maliāgar* (striped), etc. A little Mauritius cane is grown in a few villages in Baihar from seed imported from Betūl in 1905. The Lānji cane, mostly of the *dhaurī* (white) variety, was reported on as follows by the Agricultural Chemist to the Government of India: 'The juice of the 'cane at this village was not only far superior to any met 'with in the other villages, but was better than any I have 'met with in India, and was as good as or better than any 'that is produced in other countries. As a result the *gur* 'was also very superior to what is common to India'. The analysis gave 20 per cent or upwards of cane sugar in the juice in nearly every one of 16 experiments in the year 1905. In 1906 the experiments gave somewhat unfavourable results, but this was not a good year. The *kathai* is a poor yielder, but does not need so much watering as the *khushiār*. *Kathai* is nearly always grown on sandy fields near rivers and watered by wells; *khushiār* is sometimes grown in *kachhār* land, but more usually in *morand*: it is usually watered by wells, but very occasionally from tanks, as in Lānji and Bisoni. At settlement, the result of 7 experiments in *kathai* gave 1,190 lbs. *gur*, and of the one experiment in *dhauri*, 4,280 lbs. per acre.

Rabi cultivation.

114. *Rabi* cultivation is very poor in this District, being probably less carefully conducted than in any other part of the Central Pro-

vinces. Whether in open fields or in *gatiyās* or embanked fields, the soil gets only two ploughings at right angles to one another (*harrai*), and then the drill ploughing (*hāri*) is given The tilth is in consequence very inferior, and the fields are full of large clods Although the bulk of the wheat fields are embanked and specially favoured by position, the outturn is poor. The relative importance of the *rabi* crops is as under (1904-05):—

| Crop. | | Khālsa. Acres. | Zamīndāris. Acres. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wheat (*pissī*) | ... | 5,672 | 2,355 |
| Wheat other kinds (chiefly *bansī*) ... | ... | 7,899 | 576 |
| Wheat-gram | ... | 709 | 182 |
| Gram ... | ... | 14,583 | 6,053 |
| Peas[1] ... | ... | 2,294 | 1,925 |
| Lentils ... | ... | 692 | 153 |
| Chickling vetch[1] | ... | 16,712 | 5,841 |
| Ringnī juār ... | ... | 146 | 1 |
| Urad, mūng, moth[1] | ... | 28,024 | 17,616 |
| Linseed[1] ... | ... | 21,341 | 6,654 |
| Linseed-gram | ... | 707 | 165 |
| Sesamum ... | ... | 202 | 248 |
| Other oilseeds | ... | 3,090 | 1,379 |

115. Wheat, according to the Settlement Report, when grown as a second crop after rice, averaged 440 lbs as the result of 7 experiments, and as a sole crop, 61 experiments gave 455 lbs. It is not sown after rice, save in the very best fields. It seems probable that in view of the inferior tilth, the District average of 580 lbs. is too high, and perhaps 500 lbs. would be enough. The writer had an opportunity of seeing the wheat tilth of Berār, Chhattisgarh, Bālāghāt, Hoshangābād and Upper India within the space of six weeks, and the inferiority of the Bālāghāt methods even to those of Chhattīsgarh with its

Wheat.

[1] Mostly double cropped.

four ploughings was most striking. Wheat is chiefly grown in the north Karolā and Katangī groups, and in Raigarh, where it is a favourite crop with the Gonds. The series of bad years, however, which began with the rust of 1893-94, has caused wheat and gram almost to disappear from this tract.

116. Gram, peas, lentils and the chickling vetch are mostly grown in Dhansuā, Hattā, north Karola and Bhādrā. Gram does not require a very fine tilth. There are two kinds of gram grown locally, white and red. There is said to be no difference in the time they take to ripen. This crop was once very important in Raigarh, and was largely exported by Banjārās to the west of Chhattisgarh, where it is not much grown. The Settlement Report gives the following results:—

Linseed and pulses.

| | As single crop. | As double crop. |
|---|---|---|
| No. of experiments | 20 | 3 |
| Average yield ... | 565 lbs. | 447 lbs. |

The Settlement Report shows 13,528 acres sown with gram as a single, and 4,000 acres as a second, crop. The standard is 600 lbs.

Linseed is widely grown, and is mostly found as a second crop. It can grow in all the heavier soils, but is rarely found in *sihār* unless there is a mixture of brown soil. The Settlement Report gives 8,183 acres as single cropped and 20,358 acres double cropped with linseed. The result of experiments recorded at settlement was:—

| | As single crop. | As second crop. |
|---|---|---|
| No. of experiments | 6 | 7 |
| Average yield ... | 270 lbs. | 165 lbs. |

The District standard is 230 lbs.

*Lakhorī* or the chickling vetch is the small seeded variety of *Lathyrus sativus*, the large seeded, or *lākh*, not being grown in this District. The small seeded *lakhorī* is always grown as a second crop. The result of six experiments quoted by Mr. Scott is 190 lbs. In this District it is not as a rule grown in the very best land; in the

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Mungeli tahsīl of Bilāspur, it is almost entirely confined to the richest black soil fields and yields a large outturn.

Lentils, known locally as masūr (*Ervum lens*) are unimportant. The crop requires a somewhat more careful tilth than gram, and is rather liable to damage. The result of four experiments quoted by Mr. Scott gave an outturn of 180 lbs. Urad (*Phaseolus radiatus*) is specially important in the Hattā, Dhansuā and Kirnāpur groups, where it gets the best fields. A late rainfall does not suit it. Of recent years there has been a fairly brisk demand for urad. The result of three experiments quoted by Mr. Scott is 280 lbs.

Rabi oilseeds.

117. The other oilseeds grown as spring crops are mainly safflower (*Carthamus tinctorius*) locally called *karad*, and mustard (*Brassica campestris*). The former is usually grown mixed with wheat, linseed, etc., but not in alternate rows with these crops as in Berār. A patch of safflower is often found in a part of the field where the tilth has been specially inferior, or it is occasionally planted as a border, like linseed, to deter cattle from grazing on the more toothsome crops in the centre of the field. The dye-producing variety of safflower is not now grown. Mustard is chiefly found in Baihar, where it is grown in house gardens (mostly after maize) and on old village sites. It is said to do specially well as a second crop after maize. It ripens in January, and is under favourable circumstances a most prolific yielder, being very extensively grown in the jungly villages of the upper zamīndāris, where, owing to the large number of cattle, fields round the village site are very heavily manured. *Al* (*Morinda citrifolia*) was once extensively grown near Rajegaon, and there are a good many *āl* trees still left, though of course they are much too large and old to yield any dye.

Injurious insects.

118. The insects that affect crops other than rice are as follows:—

The *tidan*, (by which term the people designate both the locust and large grass-hopper), occasionally visits the District

and flights of locusts are sometimes seen in the hot weather or early rains; but there is no record of their ever doing any serious damage.

White-ants (*udai*) injure sugarcane, and also wheat when the winter rains fail. They bite through the roots of the wheat plant, which turns white and dies in consequence.

The sugarcane is also injured by a stem borer (*Chilo simplex*). Tilli plants are subject to two pests, the caterpillar of a hawk moth which eats the leaves, and a borer that makes holes in the seed capsules (*Antigastra cotatarinolis*). Tūr is visited by the Telnī beetle, by a large handsome brightly spotted insect, (*Mybalis pustulata*), and several leaf-eating caterpillars. Gram and other leguminous *rabi* crops are much damaged by the *illi*, the larva of *Chloridea obsoleta*, a green caterpillar that eats out the pods. It is specially liable to appear in cloudy weather, and its great foes are *mainās* and Rosy Pastors; when there are trees round a field for these creatures to perch on, they will soon make an end of the caterpillars. A field attacked by *illī* often seems perfectly alive with starlings of all kinds, hopping up and down in pursuit of their prey which they eat without ceasing all day long.

*Aphides* (*māhu*) are a common pest on most leguminous plants.

IRRIGATION.

119. This is practised from three sources, from tanks, from nullahs and from wells. The number of tanks in 1904-05 was as follows —

Irrigation.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Khālsa | ... | ... 2,414 |
| Zamīndāris | ... | ... 531 |

The annual irrigation has been as under :—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| At 30 years' settlement | | ... 50,318 |
| 1896-97 | ... | ... 58,339 |
| 1899-00 | ... | ... 16,190 |
| 1902-03 | ... | ... 27,960 |

In 1893-94 an area of 105,845 acres was recorded as irrigated, the accuracy of which figure appears doubtful. The total area of rice land recorded as irrigable at settlement was 88,418 acres. The unstable character of this is clear from the figures for 1899-00 and 1902-03, when the total rainfall was very short. Very few of the tanks are large, and the catchment areas are seldom, if ever, as much as a square mile in extent. No attempt has been made to dam up any of the rivers or streams that flow from the hills and to secure a really constant supply. The largest privately made tanks in the District are those at Moria in the Mau tract, at Kaidī, Alejhirri, Lānji, at Seonī in the Hattā zamīndāri and at Kirnāpur. The average area that could be protected from a tank at settlement was stated to be 28 acres. Tank irrigation is seldom effected by regular sluices, but usually by cutting the bank. First of all two cuts are made, one at each side, as high up as possible, so that as many fields may be irrigated as the water can reach; then a third cut is made at the deepest part of the tank, for the heavy rice sown in the lowest fields. The tanks are seldom provided with waste-weirs, and many of them burst in consequence. This was specially the case with tanks built by Government under Civil agency in the famine years. A channel for irrigation (called *salang* or *pāt*) often runs a long way from the tank, and is carried carefully along a contour. Similarly, contour drains are often made use of to bring water into the tank from distant slopes. The villagers and mālguzārs jointly repair all tanks which are the property of the village. An entry in the record of rights attaches irrigation rights to those fields that have enjoyed it by past custom It is a very general complaint that the mālguzār takes the lion's share of the water, and that it is only when his fields have had all they require, that the tenants' fields are allowed their share. Numerous disputes of this and kindred matters arise during the rains of nearly every year. Another fertile source of complaint is the refusal of the holder of fields lower

down the slope to allow water to be run off from fields higher up. The cultivation of the beds of irrigation tanks is forbidden by the village customs roll, as it is found that such cultivation, known locally as *āgar*, leads to the owner reducing the size and capacity of the tank, and often to his cutting the bank too soon, to let the water run off, so that he may begin his cultivation. Besides the regular irrigation tank, there are the embankments known as *gatiyās*, or *mundīs*, used to irrigate the rice fields below them; these, when the water is drawn off, are ploughed up and sown with *rabi* crops. Irrigation by damming up the smaller streams, and leading the water off in a channel is not uncommon, especially on the Chandia, the Sarāthi and the Dokria nullahs near Ramramā. Channels are often constructed with some skill, being cut through rock, and sometimes taken over small nullahs by stone bridges.

Government irrigation.

120. The attention of Government was turned to the possibility of irrigation very early in the history of the Provinces. The Waingangā tract was almost the first examined. Two schemes in particular seem to have been investigated: one, a storage scheme from two streams in the Sonewāni hills, to protect Karolā and Katangī: the other, a storage tank on the Masmer nullah, with a canal to the Nahāra, on which an anicut was to be constructed, to irrigate the left bank of the Waingangā. These schemes were however abandoned, partly owing to the general curtailment of expenditure on the Central Provinces in the early seventies, and partly to the fact that the scheme in the Nāgpur country, more specially put forward for the notice of the Government of India, was not thought sound from an agricultural point of view. Irrigation schemes remained in abeyance in the District until after the 1899-00 famine, as a result of which considerable attention was attracted towards the desirability of State irrigation, and the slopes of the Sātpurās were examined in order to discover possible sites. A great impetus was given to the movement by the Report of the Irrigation Commission, and one or two larger tanks

and a considerable number of smaller ones have been already constructed, while an extensive programme of future work has been drawn up, providing for the protection of almost the entire area below the ghāts. The so-called 'grant-in-aid' scheme designed by Mr. R. H. Craddock, I.C.S., Commissioner, Nāgpur Division, deserves notice. By this scheme tanks were constructed in mālguzāri villages, for the benefit of the mālguzārs' and tenants' lands: one half of the cost was to be borne by Government and one half by the mālguzār or mālguzār and tenants jointly; the needful sum being advanced as a *takāvi* loan, and recovered in small instalments. Two larger tanks, one at Dorlī and one at Jām Mohgaon, have been constructed at Government cost.

The question of constructing a canal from the Waingangā is under consideration, and it is likely that a suitable site will be found at the rocky barrier near Dhuti. Irrigation from this canal will be mainly confined to the right bank of the river where a considerable stretch of country can be commanded down to the Bāwanthari river in the Bhandāra District.

The maximum discharge at Ormā, a little lower down, was 428,399 cusecs in July 1906. The catchment area at this point is about 2,252 square miles. A discharge of 10,964 cusecs was obtained during 15 days of September 1906. In January and February, however, it does not as a rule exceed 50 cusecs; so that a canal constructed from this river will be chiefly useful for *kharīf* cultivation only. A scheme is also under investigation for acanal from the Son river near Lānji, where the catchment area is 379 square miles. The discharge obtained during 15 days of September 1.906 was 1689 cusecs. A discharge of 50 cusecs can be generally obtained up to the end of January.

The Bāgh river has also been ganged near Katangī. Its catchment area at this point is about 100 square miles. A discharge of over 600 cusecs was obtained for 15 days

of September 1906. A canal from this river has been proposed, with a view to irrigate the area north of it.

In addition to the above, numerous storage works are being investigated, of which the following are the more important :—

(1) Tanks at Pāldongrī and Kharāri, to protect part of the Bhādra zamindāri.

(2) A storage work near Markamaria, to protect the tracts to the south and east of Hattā.

(3) Storage works on the Sāwarjhori and Mahkāri, to protect nearly all the Mau tract.

(4) A storage tank near Wāra, to cover the south of the Kirnāpur tract.

(5) A chain of storage works, along the base of the Sonewāni hills, of which the most important will be at Jamunia, on the Dhokria and Chandia nullahs, and at Kattangjheri. These will protect such parts of Karolā and Katangī as are not reached by the proposed Waingangā canal. The water of the Dhokria nullah will be led into several of these tanks, so as to supplement their natural catchment areas. Work on three of these tanks have just been started (1907).

The upper plateaus of the Baihar tahsīl are generally much intersected by nullahs, while slopes are usually steep. It is difficult to obtain suitable sites for large schemes in this part of the District. The Banjar, Taunaur and Jamunia have been carefully examined but have been found unsuitable for schemes of any size.

Much has, however, been done on the Baihar plateau by the construction of small tanks to benefit ryotwāri villages, and there are now a number of works under investigation, amongst which may be mentioned the Damoh and Jhamul schemes in north Sāletekri, Ramgarhī and Jaglā in east Bhīmlāt and the Ukwā-Gudmā scheme on the Rūpjhar plateau near Samnāpur.

The cost of scarcely any of these works will exceed Rs. 40,000 but the Damoh and Jaglā tanks will probably be much larger

Well irrigation.

121. Well irrigation is not very extensively practised: the number of wells in 1904-05 was—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Khālsa ... | ... | ... 2,211 |
| Zamīndāri | ... | ... 934 |
| | Total | ... 3,145 |

The area irrigated by wells was—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Khālsa ... | ... | .. 2,270 |
| Zamīndāri | ... | ... 715 |
| | Total | ... 2,985 |

giving an average of less than one acre per well. But in the first place it is improbable that all the so-called 'irrigation wells' were used for irrigation in that year: in the next place many of the wells are situated in house gardens, and these are used principally for drinking purposes, and incidentally help to keep alive a trifling area of tobacco or vegetables. As a rule a well supports about 3 acres of tobacco or vegetable land. Wheat irrigation from wells is very little practised.

Time for irrigation.

122. Irrigation for rice is usually practised at three periods: the first in July or August, when the rains have been too short to allow of transplantation: another about a fortnight later, to enable the seedlings to recover after transplantation: these two waterings are only resorted to in years of comparatively short rainfall: more frequently, one or two more waterings are given in September and October to ripen the rice, and, in the case of a very late ripening kind, perhaps even a third. The duty of water calculated by the Irrigation Department is 18,000 cubic feet per acre, spread over 15 days in an ordinary year, or over 10 days in a year of drought, when 4 or more waterings are needed. The maximum number of waterings, *i.e.*, the number in a year of minimum rainfall, is six.

The duty of water, as given by local cultivators, is very much less than that given above, and the question has not yet been settled by actual experiment.

CATTLE.

123. The plateau of Raigarh has always been a favourite grazing ground with the cattle of the Nāgpur District, thousands of which make their way through Seonī to Bālāghāt in the month of February. The Raigarh tract is always spoken of in Nāgpur as Lānji, and Sir Richard Jenkins speaks of the Nāgpur herds as visiting the Lānji hills. There is however no local breed of cattle. Buffaloes are mostly supplied from Saugor, whence they are brought by Banjārās and Basdewās. A good many cattle also come from Saugor and from Bhandāra and Seonī. The chief cattle marts of the District are Wārāseonī, Lālbarrā, Katangī, Hirrī, and Mohgaon in Baihar. Voluntary cattle registration is in force in all of them, and is generally popular. The local cattle may be divided into 3 different classes, as regards the work they are fit for: (1) the wealthy mālguzār's large cattle, which can pull a heavy tonga or *khāchar* at a good pace, but are not used for ploughing. They are usually white or grey. They are handsome, docile animals, and cost not less than Rs. 120 per pair. They measure 56 inches and upwards at the shoulder. (2) The middle sized animal, that is mostly used by tenants in their *khāchars* and occasionally for the plough. These are mostly black or white, with a short tail. Their cost is from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 per pair They measure 45 inches and upwards at the shoulder. (3) The miscellaneous small animals that do most of the plough work of the District. They are not fast enough for a *khāchar*. Their cost is about Rs. 20 to Rs. 40 per pair.

Buffaloes are used for rice cultivation, especially for pulling the *khirrī* or rice sled. There is a moderate trade in *ghī*, produced by the she-buffaloes that graze in the forests. Male buffaloes cost Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 each, and female buffaloes Rs. 30 to 60.

Cows cost from Rs. 10 to Rs. 40 each. There are very few sheep in the District, owing to the small proportion of

black soil under open field cultivation. Below is a statement of the number of cattle in the District in 1899-00 and in 1904-05:—

| | 1899-00. | 1904-05. |
|---|---|---|
| Bulls and bullocks ... ... ... | 86,924 | 85,096 |
| Cows ... ... ... ... | 89,414 | 62,636 |
| He-buffaloes ... ... ... | 14,772 | 21,101 |
| She-buffaloes ... .. ... | 9,566 | 9,677 |
| Calves ... ... ... ... | 41,551 | 45,243 |
| Sheep ... ... ... ... | 606 | 179 |
| Goats ... ... .. ... | 20,658 | 25,487 |
| Horses ... ... ... ... | 1,201 | 1,291 |

The Raigarh plateau, with its low temperature, running streams, and green grass, is probably the most likely spot in the Central Provinces for horse or cattle breeding.

## CHAPTER V.

## LOANS, PRICES, WAGES, MANUFACTURES, TRADE AND COMMUNICATIONS.

### LOANS.

Agricultural loans.

124. Until the year 1893-94, agricultural loans had been unimportant. Seasons had as a rule been fairly good and when cultivators had not the seed themselves, creditors were willing to lend. With the advent of bad seasons, however, it became the policy of Government to assist local credit, which was beginning to run short, by advances under the Agricultural Loans Act. At first it was left to the people to make applications how and where they would, but afterwards certain specially needy tracts or villages were selected for enquiry; the deserving tenants were noted, and loans given them according to their need, without awaiting applications. There is no doubt that this method of administering the Act is the most satisfactory and the most logical. Enquiries are conducted on the spot and payments made at once, so that recipients are not compelled to visit headquarters.

In 1896-97 Rs. 1,34,258 and in 1897-98 Rs. 1,28,006 were advanced. and in 1900-01, the second famine, Rs. 2,70,098. After the second famine, advances were invariably made to the village as a unit, on the joint and several responsibility of all its recipients. This shortened the task of giving out loans, by lessening the clerical work, and gave a direct incentive to the villagers to prevent loans being given to unworthy recipients: should any such person apply, the rest of the village come forward and protest. The system is also valuable, as containing in it the germs of the co-operative spirit, and it is capable of being expanded into a system of co-operative agricultural banking. It is unlikely that it will be possible entirely to do away with agricultural loans; for a

long time to come they will be needed to finance the coming crop, whenever there is a serious agricultural failure, or serious mortality to cattle. The total remissions from 1871-72 to 1901-02 only amounted to Rs. 4,216, out of a total advance of over Rs. 6,14,399; but larger remissions have since been necessitated.

Land improvement loans.

125. Land improvement loans were trifling until the 1897 famine. On this occasion a large sum was advanced under specially favourable conditions to induce landowners to start village works of utility and thus to find labour for their tenantry. A sum of Rs. 17,425, besides famine loans to an amount of Rs. 1,33,320, was given out in 1896-97: and Rs. 11,670 in 1899-00 for the same purpose. No remissions had been made up to the end of 1901-02. The two chief causes that have militated against the wider usefulness of this class of loan are, first, that when times were prosperous and people could afford to make improvements, these loans were not readily obtainable, owing to the constant delays in granting them: afterwards, when their importance was recognised and applications were invited, times were too bad to tempt agriculturists to make improvements, except when very special inducements were held out, as in the famine years. Applications are always more numerous in a year of crop failure, for three reasons: first, there are a large class of men who think this an easy way of getting a loan to relieve their private necessities; secondly, a dry season emphasises the value of improvements and makes agriculturists desirous of executing them; thirdly, labour can in such a year be more cheaply and readily obtained. It is to be feared however that the first cause is the most prominent. The District is one that from its physical conformation, and from the facts that its principal crop, transplanted rice, is one that peculiarly needs irrigation, and its cultivators are skilful and enterprising, would no doubt take a considerable amount of loans of this sort when good seasons return.

126 The repeated failures of crops that occurred during the years 1894 and 1900 had produced a financial deadlock. Creditors, discouraged by repeated losses, were afraid to strain their resources in making fresh advances, and cultivators were so hopelessly indebted that they had become more or less indifferent and would make no effort to extricate themselves from their embarrassments. It was almost impossible for them to procure further loans, without which the continuous fall in the cropped area could not be arrested, nor advantage taken of a good season. No doubt, had things been left to themselves, the hopelessly indebted would have disappeared, and would have been replaced by fresh comers, but this would have been a long process, and many creditors and cultivators alike would have been ruined. Experience in other Districts in the Province warranted Government interference. The theory on which the success of the scheme devised by Mr J B. Fuller depended was that it was to the interest of creditor and debtor alike that no greater debt should be left on the latter than he could ultimately hope to pay. As soon as he sees himself in a position by which he can at the cost of whatever effort extricate himself from his embarrassments, the cultivator redoubles his exertions, and the sum ultimately realised by the creditor is little, if at all, less in the long run than he could have hoped to collect without any remission; and he has the additional advantage in the former case of possessing a solvent and grateful *clientèle*.

Conciliation.

This point of view was laid before the creditors and their adherence to the operations gradually obtained. When they had agreed to submit to arbitration, a board of respectable land-holders and moneylenders was appointed, who examined the circumstances of the debtor, and decided what sum he could reasonably be expected to pay. Each creditor's claims were reduced proportionately to their amount and validity, so as to keep the whole debt within the debtor's paying capacity. The various claims were then made payable by instalments

and the balance was finally written off. The award was reduced to writing and, as a rule, filed in court, when it obtained the force of a decree. After completion, the papers were filed in the Revenue record room. Operations were started in March 1901, and were finally completed by the end of the same year. Within this period the debts of 8,724 tenants and 507 mālguzārs, amounting to Rs. 5,86,822 and Rs. 11,69,033 respectively were dealt with. Of these sums, Rs. 87,152 and Rs. 5,05,321 were remitted in each case. The success of the proceedings was principally due to the tact and influence of Rai Bahādur Anantlāl, E.A.C., who was in charge of the operations. At the same time enquiries into the outstandings of *takāvi* were conducted; Rs. 2,98,037 of Agricultural and Rs. 28,621 of Land Improvement loans were remitted, and the balance made repayable in three instalments without interest. One of these instalments was afterwards remitted, owing to a failure of crops in the year in which it fell due.

The result of these operations has no doubt been exceedingly beneficial to the financial relations of cultivators and capitalists, and has helped, in spite of persistent bad seasons, in the recovery of the District. Instalments have been paid up in all but hopeless cases: and the success of the operations was largely enhanced by the condition that instalments should be suspended in any year in which Government revenue was remitted or suspended.

PRICES.

127. The authorities for prices in this District are, first, Sir Richard Jenkins' Report; next, the Bhandāra and Seonī Settlement Reports for the period ending with the year 1865, especially the statement appended to the former; from 1865 to 1896, Mr. Mayne's Tahsīl Report for Bālāghāt, giving the prices obtained by agriculturists from local dealers, and from 1896 onwards, the Government Gazette and local enquiry.

Authorities.

Up to 1865, Mr. Lawrence's statement of Bhandāra prices has been mainly followed. These are for Bhandāra town; they are consequently higher than the prices in the outlying village bazars and relate to a different class of transactions from those recorded by Mr. Mayne, but they are the only source now available. From 1865 till 1895, Mr. Mayne's statement of prices taken from Baniās' books in Katangī has been considered as the most accurate source of information: subsequent to that date, the Government Gazette and the results of local enquiry have been followed.

Price of rice.

128. The prices of medium rice as given in the statement appended to the Bhandāra Settlement Report (for Bhandāra town) was 10 seers in 1819: rice had been high for some years in consequence of the large demand in Nāgpur for the supply of the Marāthā armies in the constant wars that had been taking place up to this year. Prices fell to 21 seers the next year, owing to the conquest of the Marāthās by the British forces and the disbandment of their armies, and steadily declined till 1831, when they stood at 30 seers. The most serious difficulty was experienced in the working of revenue settlements that had been fixed on a basis of the prices prevailing before the establishment of peace; the Bhandāra and the Seonī District Settlement Reports, like those of other Districts, contain striking accounts of the continual reductions that had to be allowed in the Government demand. In 1832, which seems to have been a year of acute famine, prices went to 3½ seers a rupee: from that time, however, they fell back to their original level and even below it, and were more often over than under a maund a rupee till 1855, when they rose to 30 seers. They remained at about this level till 1860, when, owing to the general improvement of trade caused by the American War, they rose to 24 seers, from which they steadily appreciated till in 1865 they stood at 11 seers.

Mr. Mayne in his Report on the Bālāghāt tahsīl throws doubt on the accuracy of these prices: in any event they must have been much higher than those prevailing further from Nagpur, especially at a time when the lack of metalled roads added so much to the cost of carriage.

The record on which Mr. Mayne especially relies for the prices actually received by the cultivators are the figures extracted by himself from grain-dealers' books at Katangī. These are the prices paid by dealers to agriculturists, and though these prices probably differed by 10 or 20 per cent from the Bhandāra prices, they are the best standard for judging of the economic development of the District for the succeeding period. Up to 1870-74 the buying prices at Katangī of medium rice were as follows:—

| | Seers. | Chhattāks. |
|---|---|---|
| 1865-66 ... ... ... | 17 | 5 |
| 1866-67 ... ... ... | 15 | 2 |

In 1868-69 there was a failure of crops in the District amounting to famine; and the price, as reported in the Government Gazette, was 9 seers 7 chhattāks. The average from 1870-71 to 1874-75 was 28 seers 8 chhattāks. The year 1873-74 was said to have been one of severe loss, the rice crop of the District being estimated as a 3 anna one only: but buying prices at Katangi were only 26 seers, though the dealers sold at 17 seers 5 chhattāks. Presumably one short crop did not make much difference, owing to the large stocks that were always held in the old days.

The average from 1875-76 to 1880-81, excluding the years 1877-78 and 1878-79, when, on account of the Madras famine and local scarcity, prices ruled unusually high, was 24 seers 6 chhattaks. The railway opened to Tumsar in 1879-80, and to Amgaon in 1880-81; while the Gondia-Bālāghāt road was finished in 1883. But the average for the period from 1880-81 to 1884-85 was still as low as 25 seers 2 chhattaks. After the year 1884-85, the price hardly ever fell below 21 seers: and the average for the next quinquennial period

(1885-86 to 1888-89, was 20 seers 2 chhattāks. After this there was no great variation in prices until the years of scarcity began with 1894-95, when prices rose to 14 seers 14 chhattāks.

The prices after this are only available for the District headquarters, where they are from one to two seers higher than in outlying villages. The average for the quinquennial period 1895-99 was 12.9 seers; the price in the famine year of 1897 being 8·3 seers. Excluding this year, the average is 14 seers. The average for the 4 years ending with 1903 was 11·6 seers; in April 1903 the Sātpurā railway opened from Gondia to Nainpur for goods traffic; but the plentiful harvest reaped in the year 1903 entirely obscured the effect of this and prices averaged about 15 seers.

The difference between harvest and monsoon prices in the years between 1846 and 1865 is as a rule about 10 per cent. The average difference in February and June prices for the years from 1898-1904, excluding famine years, was only 4 per cent.

The most sudden rises occurred in August-September 1896 and again in 1899, when Bālāghāt prices rose from 20 seers in June to 7·50 seers in October.

Price of urad.

129. Next to rice, the most important crop in the District is urad. Here Mr. Lawrence's Settlement Report gives the course of prices as follows:—In 1819 the rate stood at 11½ seers. It gradually fell to one maund in 1826, and never rose above that price till 1856. In 1865 it reached 13 seers. Mr. Mayne's local enquiry gave 32 to 37 seers at the commencement of Mr. Lawrence's settlement. The average rate from 1889-1894 was 20 seers. Prices from 1897 to 1905 have fluctuated between 18 seers and 13 seers.

Price of *harrā*

130. *Harrā* is the most important non-agricultural product, especially in Baihar. The prices of this have been subject to considerable fluctuation, *e.g.*,

| | At Baihar per maund. | At Gondia per maund. |
|---|---|---|
| | Rs. a. p. | Rs. a. p. |
| 1885 ... ... | 1 10 0 | 2 0 0 |
| 1886 ... ... | 0 8 0 | 0 12 0 |

From 1889 to 1892 it ranged from Rs. 2 to Rs. 2-8 at Baihar and Rs. 2-8 to Rs 3 at Gondia. In 1894 it fell to R. 0-14-0 at Baihar and in 1895 to R. 0-12-0. The prices since then have usually been about Rs. 2-8 a maund at Gondia; in 1899 they rose as high as Rs. 3-8 and in 1900 they fell to Rs. 2-4.

Price of *ghi*.

131. *Ghī*, according to the Bhandāra Settlement Report, sold at 2½ seers in 1819. The price from 1821 to 1859 ranged from 3 to 4 seers: it then gradually rose to a seer in 1865; at Mr. Mayne's settlement it was stated to sell at 1½ to 1¾ seers. The present price (1905) is about a rupee a seer.

Price of salt.

132. The most important article of import, leaving aside cloth and yarn, the varying qualities of which make it almost impossible to calculate the price, is salt. The price of this in 1819 was 10 seers. It gradually fell till in 1832 it reached 14 seers and it remained at 14 or 15 seers till 1854, when the price began to rise. In 1863 it stood at 9 seers; after which the rise was still more rapid, reaching 5 seers in 1865. At Mr. Mayne's settlement it was stated to be from 8 to 10 seers: and it fluctuated between these prices, rarely falling to 10 seers, up to the end of 1904. Since then, owing to the reduction of duty, the prices fell first to 11¼ and finally to 13½ seers.

Price of *gur*.

133. *Gur* stood at 8 seers in 1819; after this the price gradually fell till in 1855 it had reached 10 or 11 seers: after which it rose. The Bhandāra price list gives 3 seers as the price in 1865, but local enquiry shows the rate to have been 12½ seers from 1865 to 1876: since when the price has gradually risen. In 1897 it stood at 8 seers: but rose to 6 seers in October 1904 and to 5 seers towards the end of 1905.

134. Firewood is usually cut and carted by the householder himself, as there is no large area of the District where jungle is not readily accessible. Commutation dues also cover the extraction of poles, bamboos and thorns for fencing. Where these articles have to be purchased, the principal item of cost lies in the cart hire. A large Jubbulpore or Chhattīsgarh cart costs R. 1 a day, and a small local cart 8 annas, for casual hire. The price of firewood varies from 2 to 10 and 12 annas a cartload according to the distance of the jungle. In the plain villages of Bālāghāt 8 annas may be taken as an average price; poles cost from Rs. 5 to Rs. 8 per 100 in the forest according to quality; they will fill 10 or 12 carts and their ultimate cost will be according to distance from the forest. In Bālāghāt town, for instance, good poles would cost about Rs. 20 per 100. The price of bamboos in the forest is 6 annas a hundred. In the villages dry bamboos cost about R. 1-8 or R. 1-12 a hundred: about 40 or 50 bamboos go to a cart. Charcoal costs R. 1-8 a *kāwar* load: but not much of it comes for sale; four or five cowdung cakes sell for a pice in Bālāghāt town, but in Baihar there is practically no sale for them owing to the quantity of jungle. Tiles cost R. 1 a thousand from the Kumhār: they are all of the round type; alternate flat and round tiles are not used in this District. In the plains and in towns the price is as high as Rs 2-8 or Rs. 3 a thousand. The use of tiles is increasing, partly owing to the increased price of grass, partly to the fear of fire. Thatching grass costs R. 1-4 per 1000 *pūlas* in Baihar. In Bālāghāt it costs Rs. 2-8 a 1000, but the *pūlās* are larger.[1]

Other household expenses

135. Mahuā sells at one to two rupees a *khandī*. Sometimes it drops to 2 or 3 *khandīs* to the rupee and then hardly anyone troubles to pick it up except for home consumption, as it does not pay them as well as ordinary daily labour. Mangoes sell at from

Miscellaneous supplies

[1] Owing to the large export demand, all these prices have since greatly increased, in some cases by as much as 50 or 100 per cent (1907).

300 to 500 a rupee. Chillies sold at 2 seers a rupee in 1906, but that is a very high price and is due to the Chhattīsgarh crop having failed; chillies from Chhattīsgarh are carried in *kāwar* loads through Thākurtolā and Kawardhā, to Baihar, Bālāghāt and even to Seonī, and ordinarily sell for 4½ or 5 seers a rupee. Jubbulpore supplies the uplands of Baihar with tobacco, the *bangalā* variety selling at from 3 to 4 seers a rupee. In Bālāghāt the local *Marāri* tobacco from the Son valley sells at about the same price: it is sold by the *jūri* of about ½ seer weight. *Gur* is sold by the *battī* or small cake in Katangī, and in big cakes or *chakkīs* in Baihar; it is sold by the seer there and comes from Jubbulpore. Salt comes to Bālāghāt from Bombay and to Baihar from Jubbulpore, but, since the construction of the Satpurā railway, Baihar has begun to take Bombay salt as well: the Bombay salt is in smaller lumps and is not so well liked by the Baihar people as yet. Kerosine sells for Rs. 4 or Rs. 4-4 a box of two tins; poorer purchasers usually buy it by the bottle at one anna and six pies to two annas.

WAGES.

Official returns.

136. The rate of wages of an ordinary agricultural labourer is shown in the official returns as having risen from Rs. 3-4-0 a month in 1893 to Rs. 4-11-0 in 1898: it fell in the following year to Rs. 3-12-0 at which figure it remained till 1902, when it rose to Rs. 5-4-0 and in 1903 to Rs. 5-8-0. The wages of carpenters and masons are stated to have been from Rs 6 to 10 in 1893; from Rs. 6 to 20 in the next two years, and after that Rs. 15 a month. The above rates appear to be for the headquarters town and its immediate neighbourhood; and the variations in the wages of artisans seem to have been largely due to the different standard adopted by the official reporting. An attempt has been made to give below the actual rates of wages prevailing in the District in 1905 by local enquiry.

Agricultural labour.

137. The labourer in regular employment who is paid by the year is called a *bursia*. He gets 6 *khandīs* of grain and Rs. 4 in cash

which latter is called his *baz*. His grain is paid to him at the rate of 5 *kuros* every fortnight: his wife is also usually retained on a yearly agreement, when she is called the *kabārni*; she leeps and cleans the house every few days, and does odd jobs indoors, for which she gets her food, and does other daily work, such as weeding, reaping, transplantation at a rate lower by two *paisā* a day than the casual servant gets. In return she gets one *khandī* of grain a year. In practice, however, the *barsia* nearly always gets his *baz*, and very often a good deal of his grain wages also, given him in advance on one excuse or another; at present the demand for labour is so keen that employers are bound to allow this. It costs the ordinary Gond-labourer 4 *khandīs* of grain and Rs. 16 to be married, so that the financing of the matrimonial affairs of a Gond labourer's family with several daughters must demand rather careful management. But the labourer, regular or casual, has various other sources of livelihood. First there is the rice harvest, in which he takes from the crop that he is cutting enough for his food, while the extra wages earned by his family enable him to put by enough grain to carry him along for some time. Then comes, in Baihar, the *harrā*: children and women can earn a good wage by picking up and selling this to the local contractors. On the Seonī and Mandlā borders follows the wheat harvest; while almost all over the District there is plenty of mahuā at the end of March and in April and in the jungly parts *chār* as well Before the mahuā comes the *ber* fruit, and after it, *gullīs* (mahua fruit) and gum. The more thickly populated tracts are worse off in point of jungle products, but on the other hand they afford constant opportunities for employment in the repair of field banks, and the building or mending of houses.

As soon as the rains break, the demand for labour begins to grow keener: ploughmen, men to mend field banks, boys to watch cattle and sow grain, are needed, and, when the transplanting season begins, every one who can possibly work is employed on it. The rains also yield a plentiful supply of

wild vegetables; while in September the *deodhān* or *parsor* (wild rice) grows in almost every tank, and in August the maize crop is ready in the cottage gardens. It is at this period, between the transplanting and the harvest, that labourers are worst off, and these early crops are very welcome. Many labouring castes add to their earnings by keeping goats and pigs, the latter being particularly profitable, as they cost little to keep and will always fetch Rs. 3 or 4.

Monthly servants.

138. Besides the *barsia* there are servants working under a monthly agreement, known as *mahinkias*. They are said to have been paid Rs. 2 a month in Baihar before the railway came to the District; now they get Rs. 3. These monthly servants usually get a retaining fee of one *khandī*, which in the case of a man is called *khariān*, and of a woman *sīla*. The ordinary rates of wages for transplanting, weeding, reaping, etc., have been given in the chapter on agriculture. These vary a good deal, *e.g.*, they are 2 to 3 *paisā* higher in Mau than on the Baihar plateau. The rates in 1906 for transplantation were as follows: near Bālāghāt 8 days per rupee: near Katangī 5 days per rupee: north Karolā 12 to 16 days a rupee.

Graziers

139. The regular village grazier is called *gohnia* or *gaiki*. He gets 5 *kuros* for each cow and an anna for each pair of bullocks for the year. The owner has to bear all losses, though the *gohnia* is supposed to search for strays, but, as he cannot leave his herd in the day time, his search is not very strenuous. The owner gets all the milk of his cattle, and the Chhattīsgarhī custom, whereby the grazier takes the milk every fourth day, is not known. The latter however usually helps himself to as much milk as he wants. Sometimes two or three tenants combine to hire a boy to watch their cattle in the transplanting season, for which he gets 5 *kuros* a month. Well-to-do men with a score or more of cattle keep their own herdsman, who is paid like a *barsia*, while he also gets a pair of shoes and some clothes.

140. A big landlord with a number of cattle will also find it necessary to keep a *gobrain*. She gets two *khandīs* of grain and Rs. 2 a year: and it is her duty to collect the cowdung in and round her master's house and yard; to dry and stack it for fuel; or pit it for manure. She also leeps the floor and whitens the walls.

*Gobrain.*

141. Watermen are not employed in Bālāghāt as in Chhattisgarh or in the northern Districts, or even just over the border in Mandlā. The very well-to-do, and settlers from other Districts employ a waterman, but it is not the local custom. In his stead is the *ghardandia*, a veritable 'general servant': he makes the *ghī* and butter-milk, (surely a feminine occupation), warms and carries the bath-water and sees to the washing arrangements of the men of the house, chops the wood and cleans the plates and dishes. For this he gets the 6 *khandīs* and Rs. 4 of the *barsia*, and in addition food and clothes.

The *Ghardandia.*

142. There is generally a tendency in favour of paying village servants by the job. Not nearly so many village servants are paid by annual dues as in Chhattīsgarh and the number is tending to lessen. Sir Richard Jenkins has the following remarks on the subject of village servants in his day :—

Village servants.

'The carpenter is obliged to repair the agricultural 'implements of the *kirsāns*, for which he has an allowance 'of 4 or 5 *kuros* annually from each plough. For new 'implements he is paid separately. The blacksmith is on 'the same footing. The Chamār who mends the leathern 'apparatus of wells, etc, has a trifling grain allowance. 'The washerman and barber have likewise petty dues. All 'these village officers collect their own dues, after the har-'vest is gathered. The carpenter, blacksmith and kotwār 'receive their dues regularly. The others commonly receive 'only a portion of theirs, and in bad years very little.'

Under the present *régime*, the kotwārs and patwāris have the assistance of Government in receiving their dues

but the others have to rely solely on public opinion, and it is a standing grievance with them that Government will not help them to collect their *birat* as it is called.

The Blacksmith.

143. The Lohār gets 2½ *kuros* per plough, if the *kirsān* provides charcoal: if the Lohār has to find charcoal, the rate is 5 *kuros*. But payment by the job or daily labour is now not uncommon. Thus he gets R. 1 for the iron work of a *pailī* cart. He is always paid separately for new or unusual work. At the Diwāli, Jiwathi, and Polā, the Lohār knocks a nail into every one's doorpost to ward off evil from the inhabitants of the house; for this he gets a small present of cash or grain.

The Carpenter.

144. The Barhai or carpenter gets no *birat*, but is invariably paid by the job or by daily labour. The usual rate is 4 annas a day: while his charge for making the wood-work of a *pailī* cart is Rs. 3. A Barhai who can make a cart will only be found in one out of each five or six villages.

The Cobbler.

145. The shoemaker is not on the village roll as is the case in Chhattīsgarh. For general mending, however, many persons contract to pay him a *kuro* or two a year: if he works by the job, he gets a *paisā* or two for mending one pair of shoes. Marārs and garden cultivators give 5 *kuros* grain, a little *gur* and a *bhojā* of rice to him for keeping their *mot* in order; a new *mot* costs from Rs. 3 to 6. A different type of shoe, called *bhadai*, is used in the rains, as the ordinary loose shoes tend to stick in the mud and come off; these cost 3 or 4 annas; ordinary shoes cost from 8 annas to R. 1-4-0: a plough strap or *nārī* costs 2 to 4 annas. The cobbler usually turns up at weddings with a pair of new shoes, for which he expects a present. The delays and excuses of the village cobbler over shoes given him for repairs have passed into a proverb. 'There are two men that are accounted liars: the grazier, when 'he says of the lost cow "It is gone on in front into the village": 'and the cobbler, when he says, "Take them and wear them."'

146. The Bareth or washerman gets 5 or 10 *kuros* a year from each house for which he washes, according to the status of the householder. It is only the better-to-do who regularly employ the Bareth, the poorer people manage for themselves, except on the ceremonial occasions on which his assistance is indispensable. At a birth or a death he washes the clothes of every one who attends. The Bareth or Dhobī's caste is unclean and he is not allowed to come into the houses of the better castes, nor to touch their water vessels. Like the Teli, the Dhobī's is an unlucky caste, the sight of whom is a bad omen when starting on a journey or going out in the morning. Old clothes are often made over to the washerman. He washes all clothes, except those which are unclean from any special cause. Those who possess silk garments do not care to trust them with the village washerman; they usually either wash them at home or send them to Bālāghāt or some place where skilled washermen are available.

The Washerman.

147. The Kumhār gets no dues; he sells his pots at so much apiece according to size and quality; only on the Akhā Tīj festival the villagers come to his house and take from him three vessels, the *karsā*, the *karhai* and its cover the *parhai*, which are kept in the houses and used for ceremonial purposes. For this a small reward in grain or cash is given. At weddings the Kumhār brings 17 earthen pots, the Basor brings a basket, a fan and a net, and the Kahār the *mor* or peacock ornament, for each of which they expect a present.

The Potter.

148 The functions of this individual are so numerous that it is only possible to give a slight sketch of them. He is the scandal bearer and gossipmonger (*chugal*) of the village. His cunning is proverbial and he is known as *chhattīsa* in consequence. He is a matchmaker and often a confidential family adviser as well, and the proverbs about him are endless. He usually gets

The Barber.

5 *kuros* a head from the ordinary villager, in return for which he shaves him once or twice a month. Well-to-do men give him 3 *khandīs* a year and food and clothes, and these he shaves every 5 or 10 days; while every evening he comes to prepare their bedding, shampoo their feet, light their pipe, and so forth: and at this time he is allowed his portion of the evening meal.

He does not go and call the caste-fellows to weddings in this District, but only the villagers. His functions at weddings are unending: he is always in attendance and is second only to the Brāhman. His wife assists in the bathing and hair-dressing of the bride and her lady friends. At funerals he is much in request to shave the mourners, assist in preparing leaf plates, etc., and the Nain washes and anoints the mother and child, when the 12 days' impurity after birth have elapsed. Up till then the *dai*, who is either a Nagarchin, Kolin, or Mehrain, is in attendance: she gets 8 annas for a boy and 4 annas for a girl, and various odd perquisites. The Nai usually gets a present for his attendance on guests at weddings and funerals, which ranges from a little grain or a few annas in the case of a poor man's house, to a cow or several rupees from a rich mālguzār.

The Purohit.

149. The Purohit, of whom there is usually only one for every 10 villages, is paid according to the ceremonies he performs; *e.g.*, the tariff for *kathā* or *satnāraın* ceremonies is Rs. 2 or 1-8-0. He assists in the worship of Mahādeo in the month of Shrāwan, on name giving days, at weddings, and in the case of well-to-do people at the Pitripaksh ceremony in Bhādon. He does not assist in the *pūja* to Devi. Vaishnavas and Shāktas, who are the principal local sects, have separate Purohits.

The Bhāt.

150. The Bhāt is the wandering minstrel, who sing songs in praise of the famous men of the caste and is a depository of caste and tribal tradition so far as it exists. Every division of

every caste has its own Bhāt, who attends to all the persons belonging to that caste or division within certain territorial limits. He attends at births, deaths and weddings, and also appears at odd times as he makes his rounds : what he gets is entirely dependent on the wealth and generosity of his patrons.

MANUFACTURES.

Brass work

151. The only place where brass and copper workers are found in this District is Wārāseoni. They are of two classes, Panchāls and Kasārs, their trade being quite distinct: the former being makers of wrought work and the latter working at founding or casting. The Panchāls are again subdivided into workers in brass or copper and workers in *kānsa*, a mixture made of four parts of copper to one of tin. These people are mere artizans, who make and sell their goods to middlemen; they get 4 annas a seer in the case of iron and copper ware, and 6 annas for *kānsa*, for their labour.

The articles ordinarily made are cooking utensils, bells (*ghantās* for temples and *ghungrūs* for bullocks), *lotās*, and *pairias* (anklets) for women, made of *bharat* (a mixture of brass, copper and other metals). They are all of a simple and unornamented make. The earnings of a workman average Rs. 10 or 12 a month. Makers of wrought work have to employ six or seven assistants, and the other divisions of the trade two helpers, who are paid 2 annas a day each.

Beaten brass utensils fetch R. 1-2, copper R 1-4, and articles in cast metal 14 annas a seer.

Carpentering.

152. The ordinary carpenters of the District who can make carts or doors or repair agricultural implements are numerous. The number of working carpenters at the census of 1901 was 311. There are a few of the more skilful class of carpenters found in the District. These are divided into two classes, Pardesi Barhais and Marathā Barhais These are the men

who make the carved beams and pillars with which the better class mālguzārs and traders ornament their houses. Their method of work is said to be as follows :—

After smoothing the surface of the wood, the pattern is sketched on by help of the *parkār* (compasses), with a piece of string and red ochre. The usual subjects are floral or foliage designs, and occasionally grotesque figures of animals or of the god Ganesh. The tools used by these men are :—

*Basūla* (adze), *patāri* (chisel), *chīma* (gouge, the large variety being called *gundia* and the small *charāsi*), *kirkā* (chisel), *arī* (saw), *parkār* (compasses), *barmā* (drill), *hathorā* (hammer), *gaj* (measure), *randā* (plane), *kanār* (file). Skilled workmen make from 8 to 12 annas a day.

153. The weaving castes of the District are Koshtās and Mahārs. The number of persons working at the trade of weaving in 1901 was 7,685. They mostly live in Bālāghāt, Wārāseonī, Mehdīwāra, Lingā, in and round Katangī, Lālbarrā, and Kirnāpur. The ordinary country loom as used by the local weavers costs Rs. 4. The following are the principal descriptions of articles produced.

Weaving.

*Sāris*, which fetch from Rs. 2-8 to 3; *Chaukhānas*, used as *pagrīs* or handkerchiefs, of which a piece of 30 feet by 2 feet broad sells at R. 1-12; *Khadīs*, 30 feet long by 2¼ feet wide, at Rs. 2; *Dhotīs*, 30 feet by 3½ feet, at Rs. 2-8. Silk-bordered work is produced in Wārāseonī and Mehdīwāra, but it is not to be compared with the fine Nāgpur or Bhandāra work. *Sāris* of this kind cost from Rs. 6 to 7. A few weavers make twills, which sell at Rs. 3-8 per *dhotī* of 30 feet by 2¼ feet.

A man, with his wife to help in reeling, warping and sizing the thread, can make a *sāri* in 3 days; the yarn costs them Rs. 2-4 and it will sell for Rs. 3.

The difficulty in the way of the introduction of the fly-shuttle is that a warping and sizing factory is needed before the fly-shuttle can work successfully. The weavers cannot

put up the long warps that are needed to make the fly-shuttle a success: the fly-shuttle quadruples or quintuples the number of picks a weaver can do, but his family cannot do the necessary amount of warping and sizing to keep him supplied.

Gold washing.

154. Gold washing is carried on to a small extent in the Son, Deo, Tānda, Kastūri, Nahara, Banjar, Jamunia, and Taunaur rivers. A spot in the dry river bed is selected at the outside of a bend, where the finer sediment is likely to be found: after removing the stones and pebbles from above, the sand below is washed several times in wooden cradles called *kalhūti*, of diminishing sizes, till all the clay is removed, and fine particles of sand mixed with gold are visible. A large wooden spoon, called *wālu*, is used in this process, to stir up the sediment, which is washed and rubbed by hand to separate the gold more completely from the sand, and a blackish residue is left, containing particles of gold, and pebbles coloured black with oxide of iron. Mercury is used to pick up the gold with which it forms an amalgam. This is evaporated in a clay cupel called a *ghariyā*, by which the mercury is got rid of and the gold left behind.

The gold washers form a caste known as Sonjhirias. They are not numerous; only 63 were returned at the last census, out of whom 50 actually work at their caste profession. They have no constant abode, but pitch their huts in the wildest and loneliest jungle, along the banks of streams, in the open season, usually resorting to some neighbouring village in the rains, when they have perforce to abandon work. Their beliefs and caste subdivisions closely resemble those of the Gonds, with whom they seem to have many points in common. They speak Hindī however and not Gondī. They sacrifice a goat to the spirit that haunts the spot on which they decide to start work; and they will leave it for fear of angering this spirit (who is said to appear in the form of a tiger), should they

make a particularly good find. They are said to throw away their food should a dog come near them while eating. A few other castes, such as Musalmāns, Gonds and Pankās, also practise gold washing. They mostly sell their gold in Baihar: their earnings are miserable, not exceeding 2 or 3 annas a day.

Goldsmiths and jewellers.

155. The goldsmith's or jeweller's trade is not an important one in the District, and the better class of ornaments are bought from outside.

Sonārs are the principal caste who practise the trade. The number of persons so engaged was 969 at the 1901 census, against 2,838 in 1891. If the figures are correct, the famine must have very adversely affected the industry.

Sonārs are of the following divisions: *viz.*, Pardesīs from Upper India, Awadhias from Oudh, Deogarhias from Rewah, Mārāthās and Panchāls from the Deccan, and Mārwāris from Rājputāna.

Sonars are invariably found in the larger towns and villages; many have now abandoned their original profession and taken to agriculture.

The chief tools used by Sonārs are *nihāl* (anvil), *hathorā* (hammer), *chimtā* (pincers), *chenā* (chisels of different kinds to suit the different kinds of work), *retā* (file), *narwāha* (blow pipes), *dhasī* (dies), *ikwai* (punches), *parkār* (tongs), *ghariya* (crucible), *katarnī* (scissors) and *pārdhan* (moulds). A plate of iron perforated with holes of graduated diameter called *jantrā* is used for wire drawing. Common work is charged for at 2 annas a tolā: more elaborate work and wire drawing is much more expensive. Various alloys are used for welding; a mixture of copper and silver in a proportion of one to three for welding gold, and zinc for welding silver are employed for this purpose, though a dishonest workman will add more of the baser metal.

Another class called Jhadyās are also found in connection with the goldsmith's trade. They buy up the sweepings of the Sonār's shop, including the old crucibles, which they crush to pieces and then melt out the remains of the gold and silver. They belong to no special caste and their earnings do not exceed 4 annas a day.

Grain measures.

156. The chief weights and measures in force in the District are as follows:—In Baihar the *pao* or *barhiyā* contains 25 tolās of wheat: and a *pailī* contains 100 tolās or 1¼ seers. A *kuro* consists of 5 such *pailīs* or 6¼ seers. Twenty *kuros* make a *khandī*. In Bālāghāt, a *kuro* contains 5½ *pailīs*. In eastern Baihar the Chhattīsgarhī measures of twenty *kāthās* to the *khandī* and twenty *khandīs* to the *gāra* are in force. A *kāthā* according to Mr. Carey's Raipur Settlement Report holds 4 seers 5 chhattāks of wheat. An enquiry into local varieties of measures in 1884 showed that in Baihar alone there were *kuros* in use containing as widely discrepant quantities of wheat as 6 seers 2 chhattāks and 6 seers 12 chhattāks, besides which there was a big iron *kuro* holding 10 seers 8 chhattāks and a small *kuro* holding 3 seers 2 chhattāks. The statement on the next page taken from Mr. Scott's Settlement Report exhibits the weight of the different kinds of grain contained in each of the *kuros* in ordinary use among the people.

Other measures and weights.

157 The general measures of weight in the District are, the seer of 16 chhattāks, and the chhattāk of 5 tolās. There are maunds of 10 seers for sugar or *kirana* and of 12 seers for *ghī* besides the ordinary maund of 40 seers. Jewellers use the following weights; 2 *gunjs* make one *wāl*: 4 *wāls* a *māshā* and 12 *māshās* a tolā. Another system of weighing is by the silver rupee, one sixteenth of which or one anna is equal to 3 *wāls* There are two *pas-rīs*, one of 5 seers used for lac, *harrā*, etc., and one of 6¼ seers for vegetables. Another measure called a *bārā* of half a seer is used for

| Description of grain. | WEIGHT OF GRAIN PER KURO. | | | | Weight in seers of bhātia or local khandī (20 kuros.) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Lambari kuro. | | Bhātia kuro | | | |
| | Seers. | ch. | Seers. | ch. | Seers. | ch. |
| Rice, unhusked ... | 7 | 6½ | 5 | 7½ | 109 | 6 |
| Rice, husked ... | 9 | 9 | 6 | 6½ | 128 | 2 |
| Wheat ... | 10 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 146 | 4 |
| Kodon, unhusked ... | 7 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 108 | 12 |
| Urad ... | 10 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 140 | 0 |
| Linseed ... | 8 | 7 | 5 | 12 | 115 | 0 |
| Gram ... | 10 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 147 | 8 |
| Tūr ... | 9 | 10½ | 6 | 9½ | 132 | 7 |
| Mahuā (dried) ... | 6 | 4 | ... | | . | |

measuring *ghī* Oil is sold by the *pailī* as a rule but sometimes by weight. *Gur* is sold by pieces known as *battīs*. The English pound measures are used by many shops, especially for such goods as tea and European groceries.

Measures of length are:—3 *anguls* equal one *girah*, 16 *girahs* make a *gaz* or yard; two *hāths* make a *gaz*, nominally speaking, but they really somewhat exceed it. Two *bīlish* or spans make a *hāth*. A measure of the depth of water is the *purush* or fathom, being the height a man can reach with his hands above his head For earth work, the *pasorī* of 5 *hāths* long by five *hāths* wide by a *mundā hāth* (from elbow to knuckles deep) is the regular unit: it may be taken as equivalent to 72 cubic feet. The measures of distance are, two *dhāps* or miles to the *halkā kos*. The *Gondī dhāp* or *kos* is half as long again.

TRADE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Roads.

158. The main line of communications in the District is the Sātpurā railway, which will be separately described. The various roadways of the District, though mostly built before the advent

of the railway, all, with one exception, serve as feeders to it. This exception is the Bālāghāt-Gondia road, which was originally the main line of communications and indeed the only metalled road in the District. It enters the District where it crosses the Bāgh river at Rajegaon: and is bridged and metalled all the way to Bālāghāt (15 miles).

The road next in importance is the road from Bālāghāt *viâ* Wārāseonī to Katangī (29 miles). This road is metalled throughout its length and has everywhere culverts or nullah-crossings save over the Chunnai river. It passes through the important trade centre of Wārāseonī, 10 miles from Bālāghāt.

Two roads from Seonī-Chappāra to the railway traverse the District. One descends the Kormī ghāt, and makes for Tumsar station *viâ* Katangī (length in the Bālāghāt District 14 miles). The other, from the Kanjai ghāt, enters the town of Lālbarrā and thence leads through Wārāseonī to Rāmpailī (length within the District 26½ miles). Other roads run from Lālbarrā to Bālāghāt, with a ferry crossing the Gangā at Burhī, and from Lālbarrā to Samnāpur; this road crosses the Gangā at Bamni, where it is shallow save in the rains. A branch road leads from Rajegaon on the Bālāghāt-Gondia road to Kirnāpur (6 miles) with an unbridged crossing over the Deo river; and is continued on from Kirnāpur to Lānji (18 miles), crossing the Son by a ford. Another road from Lānji to Amgaon on the Bengāl-Nāgpur Railway main line runs for 12 miles within the District. It has an unbridged crossing over the Bāgh. Two roads connect Baihar with the railway, one at Lamta 32 miles, and one at Bālāghāt 41 miles in length. Both of these are metalled and bridged throughout and descend to the plain by fine ghāts, and another road from Baihar to Toplā for the sleeper traffic is under construction.

Directions of traffic.

159. Generally speaking, the traffic converges on the Sātpurā railway, but there are exceptions to this. Hardly any of the traffic

to the west of the Waingangā reaches the Sātpurā line. The traffic from Katangī goes to Tumsar, and that from Wārāseonī to Rampailī. The traffic from Lālbarrā mostly goes to Barghāt in the Seonī District, whence the rice is transported by road to Gādarwāra in the Narsinghpur District without availing itself of the railway at all; some of it goes to Rāmpailī through Wārāseonī. The distance from Katangī to Bālāghāt is 29 miles, and to Tumsar 35 miles. The rates per bag average about 5 annas to Tumsar and 4 annas to Bālāghāt, yet scarcely any one sends grain to Bālāghāt. Various causes are alleged: the superiority of the Tumsar market and the difficulty of crossing the Waingangā are the two principal reasons. A bridge over the Gangā would probably secure the Wārāseonī and Lālbarrā traffic for Bālāghāt, even if a light railway were made to Katangī. A little trade is now beginning to pass between Samnāpur and Lālbarrā. The principal product of this tract is rice, and much of it is of a very high quality. At present it largely finds its way into Nāgpur, Wardhā and Berār. Linseed, urad and wheat are other articles of export.

The trade from Wārāseonī to Rāmpailī accounts for about 40 per cent of the trade of the tract west of the Waingangā: the remainder is divided between Katangī, Barghāt and Bālāghāt. Hitherto the Sātpura railway has not seriously affected the trade conditions of the tract.

The villages around Katangī and Wārāseonī contain numerous weavers, who belong to the Mahār and Koshtā castes. They buy their thread as a rule from merchants in Wārāseonī and Katangī, and visit these and other neighbouring bazars to sell their cloth. The importance of the Katangī and Wārāseonī bazars is due primarily to the cloth trade, and next to the sale of cattle. Wārāseonī also does a large trade in the sale of brass and other metal vessels and ornaments. A good deal of grain is also brought into these bazars, either in discharge of loans, or to sell to the local merchants, and to retail purchasers from the Nāgpur District and elsewhere. Lālbarrā does less

trade in cloth than either of the other two bazars, but it has a good market for cattle and grain. It is frequently visited by professional buffalo-sellers from the northern Districts.

It must be remembered that this is the oldest established and longest civilised tract in the District, having formed part of the Saugor-Nerbudda territories; the effects of this can still be seen in various slight differences between the people of this and of the Kirnāpur and Lānji tracts. It is the nearest part of the District to Nagpur and Kamptee, from which it was not cut off, like the rest of the District, by the Waingangā. In the early history of the trade of the District, the Waingangā played no unimportant part. All exports that did not find their way by road to Tumsar for Kamptee were handed over to the Dhimars, whose boats during the rains plied on the Gangā and its tributaries the Bāgh, the Ghisarī, and the Son, and the grain was carried down to Tumsar by boat. Loss or damage was comparatively rare.

The wide plain to the east of the Waingangā, until the building of the Sātpurā railway, exported its goods to Gondia, excepting the south-eastern tracts of Lānji and Bhādra, which dealt with Amgaon

Such portions of the Baihar export trade as are intended for places outside the District are probably put on to the rail at Bālāghāt or elsewhere: but over the rest of east Bālāghāt the agents of the Gondia traders still visit the villages in the cold weather and Gondia continues to draw most of the grain trade. It is only when the Bālāghāt traders become more numerous and enterprising, and offer better prices, that Gondia is likely to be ousted: and the only cause likely to bring this about would seem to be the diversion of some portion of the rice export towards Jubbulpore, which at present draws its better quality supplies from Saugor and Damoh.

The chief trading centres in the tract east of the Waingangā are Hattā and Kirnāpur; but their importance has much declined, since the trade no longer goes from these

parts direct to Tumsar and Kamptee ; there is not a single bazar save Bālāghāt which can compare in activity or importance with either of the three bazars west of the river.

There is an important cattle bazar at Hirrī, established by the late zamīndār of Bāmhangaon, and there are the usual number of local weekly bazars.

Lac trade.

160. The rise of the trade in lac has been very marked in this eastern tract. Prices have ruled high of recent years, and many mālguzārs and zamīndārs have given much attention to the crop ; it is usually grown on *palās* trees, and in open country rather than in dense jungle. As an example of the extent to which the trade has increased, the mention of one case will suffice. The *siwai* assessment of the zamīndār of Bhādra for lac amounted at settlement to less than Rs. 1,000 ; at present his net income from lac varies from Rs. 32,000 to Rs. 34,000 a year. The lac trade is mostly in the hands of local contractors who are financed by Gondia merchants.

Trade of Baihar.

161. The trade of the Baihar tahsīl consists at present chiefly of sleepers and scantlings, of which an account will be given when describing the forests of the District. The *harrā* trade, too, is considerable, but *harrā* is also a forest product.

The villages of Baihar and Bhīdi are the only two places which collect much agricultural produce : this leaves the plateau by the Lāmta and Balāghāt roads. There is also some trade in the north of the tahsīl from Niwāri and Nainpur in Mandlā. Enquiries made in 1904 would seem to justify a belief that the export of agricultural produce from the plateau is about 50,000 maunds a year. The only other places of importance from a trading point of view are Gudmā, where a little grain trade is carried on, and Morgaon, where there is a considerable cattle and general bazar. The main trade routes, other than metalled roads, are (1) a road through the Mau tāluk parallel with the railway, and since its coming sunk into unimportance ; (2) the

Ahmadpur ghāt, leading from the plateau to the last named route, which it joins at Mau, a large bazar; (3) the road from Baihar up the Bhaisānghāt to Motīnāla; this is now under construction as a second-class road; (4) another much used route is that from Baihar through Bodā to Mandlā; and (5) another from Baihar through the bazars of Mohgaon, Mānegaon and Damoh into the Sāletekri zamīndāri, thence down the Bodrā ghāt and along the Son valley to Lānji. Should a railway be constructed through the Banjar valley from Mandlā to Bilāspur, this road will become important.

A track barely passable by carts leads from the Kawardhā State through Damoh and the valley of the upper Son to Bitli, where it meets the road that goes from Sonpurī through the Bhānpur zamīndāri down the Bhānpur pass; this ghāt is very difficult for wheeled traffic to ascend, on account of its steepness.

The Mandlā-Bilāspur road, which is aligned but not metalled, runs along the northern boundary of the Raigarh plateau, and a good forest track through Toplā and Sūpkhār joins it at Chilphī in the Kawardhā State.

Transport.

162. There are three kinds of transport carts in the District, which are distinguished by their wheels.

(1) The *lona*.—This is the very old kind with solid, narrow-edged wheels, made without spokes of one or more slabs of wood. They are seldom seen now-a-days; at one time the narrow edge of the wheel did so much damage to the roads that they were forbidden to use metalled roads.

(2) The *mātwa*.—The wheels have spokes, one pair of which at opposite sides of the wheel are of a single piece of wood; on to these two and into the hub and fellies the remaining spokes are fastened; they go very deep into the fellies, and the hub has most of its external surface covered by a hemispherical iron plate, fastened on with strong bolts; this cart is very strong and heavy, and costs Rs. 20

it is seldom made now-a-days, as the next kind is so much lighter and cheaper.

(3) The *paulī*.—The wheel of this kind has fewer spokes, and they are not so firmly fastened in. The hub has only a single band of hoop-iron round it, and the spokes are all separate. Should the tire come off, a *paulī* wheel will fall to pieces almost immediately, whereas a *mālwa* wheel can be made to last a few miles in case of necessity. A *paulī* costs from Rs. 10 to 12.

Carts can go nearly everywhere in the District save in the upper zamīndāris, but the memory of the old days of difficult ghāts and heavy roads dies very hard, and the local carts are still exceedingly light and of very little capacity. Their hire for a camping season is at the rate of Rs. 12 a month; if paid by the job, they will carry 3 bags at 6 annas a bag for 30 miles. The daily rate is 8 annas. Their average load on the level is 12 maunds. A *tattū* (small pony) is mostly used for carrying cloth or *kirāna* It can carry 64 pairs of *dhotīs*. A bullock's load is 4 maunds.

Village bazars

163. The chief agency for distributing imported articles of daily use is the weekly bazar. There are 41 in the Bālāghāt and 14 in the Baihar tahsil, or an average of one for every 23 villages in the District. Adjoining bazars are usually arranged on a roster, so that the itinerant vendors, in whose hands is most of the trade, may be able to visit a different bazar every day.

In more important places such as Wārāseonī, Lālbarrā, Bālāghāt, Lingā and Lānji, a *gusrī* or daily bazar is also held The weekly bazars usually begin about 1 P.M. Strings of people, both sellers and buyers, are seen making their way towards the village all the morning, with carts, pack-horses, head and *kāwar* loads according to their stock-in-trade and means. They assemble at the regular bazar site which is sometimes in the main village street, sometimes in a grove or other suitable spot outside. Some supervision is usually exercised over the bazar by the mālguzār or other

leading persons of the village. Quarrels have to be settled about the allotment of sites of stalls, or the levying of their dues for cleaning the bazar site and attending on the bazar by sweepers and kotwārs. Zamīndars are not prohibited from taking bazar fees: but mālguzārs are not allowed to levy them. A constable is usually deputed to attend all bazars of importance, as the purse-cutting fraternity often seize the opportunity for adding to their earnings, and the various begging castes of *fakirs*, *garorīs*, etc., are also not above snatching up unconsidered trifles. These persons are also not ignorant of the various methods of petty cheating practised on shopkeepers all over the world; 'ringing the changes' or confusing the shopkeeper by an apparent inability to make up his mind as to what he will buy, or in what form he wants his change being a favourite device of the bazar swindler.

Classes of traders.

164. The principal classes of dealers are, first, the Marārs, who bring green vegetables, chillies, onions, sugarcane, etc., for sale. they nearly always have one member of the family in constant attendance at bazars, while the rest work in the garden: next, the tobacco-sellers, who keep tobacco, snuff and leaf cigarettes, besides all sorts of so-called *kirāna* or spices, including many curious articles whose use is often due to a belief in their supposed magic qualities: the cloth-sellers including the village weavers, who have brought in two or three cloths which they have woven during the week to sell to itinerant buyers: as well as the itinerant vendor who has bought up an assortment of cloths, and has a whole cartload displayed in all the gaiety of red, blue and silk-woven *āchkrās* (borders) to tempt the purchaser; then there is the Manihār whose stall glitters with an assortment of cheap Austrian or German mirrors and hard-ware, blunt and wobbly scissors, boxes with tawdry pictures on their lids, strings of beads, nutmeg-graters, small tins, bottles, and hollow glass penholders with a drop of water inside them: the seller of bangles, whether of metal or glass, the latter varying from the pretty red, blue, or golden

product of the local bangle makers to the hideous and costly cut-glass article from Europe; and the seller of brass pots, whose picturesque and clattering wares are heaped round him in all the glitter of newness.

Appearance of village bazars.

165 The better-to-do tradesmen actually boast tents, and, with the assistance of a few boxes and wooden boards, practise the noble art of window-dressing; while the humble Mararin, with her few withered-looking vegetables, simply spreads out a garment on the ground and lays her wares on it.

The whole scene is one of the greatest animation, the constant coming and going of purchasers, the cries of the vendors to draw attention to their goods, the clatter of bargaining tongues, the dust, the smells of queer spices and sweetstuff, the glitter of the specious wares of the Manihār, the bright mixture of colours on the vegetable-sellers' stalls, the rows of cattle standing for sale, the groups of carts waiting to take their owners home when the sale is over, all make up a picture that must present itself to the dweller in the peaceful Indian village as a pleasant break in the monotony of the week.

The grain trade is not much affected by the village bazar; it is the big Baniās resident in the towns and larger villages, who handle the grain exports: and it is only in certain places such as Katangī and Bālāghāt, the meeting-places of the dwellers in tracts producing different kinds of grain, such as the wheat of Seoni, the rice of Katangī and Bālāghāt, and the cotton and juār of Rāmtek, that much grain is handled at local bazars.

Nearly all the travelling hucksters are supplied by the tradesmen of local towns, of course on trade terms; and these in their turn purchase direct from Bombay, Calcutta, or Nāgpur.

Construction of Sātpura Railway.

166. The opening of the Sātpurā railway is a factor which will ultimately prove of paramount importance to local trade. The scheme had long formed the subject of

discussion: but it was not till the famine of 1899-00 that a favourable opportunity arose for its inception. In this year it was necessary to find relief work for large numbers of labourers in consequence of the complete failure of the monsoon of 1899: and the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway agreed to take over the earthwork of the proposed railway if done by famine labour. The railway administration were saved a great deal of expense by the unusual cheapness with which the work was done, and much useful employment was provided for famine labourers. In July 1901, almost directly after the famine relief operations were completed, the remaining construction work was put in hand by the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway: and the line was opened from Gondia to Nainpur for goods and passenger traffic by 18th April 1903 and 16th January 1904 respectively. In June 1905 the line was opened through to Jubbulpore. The total cost of the line on capital account up to the end of December 1905 was Rs. 1,24,73,650; assuming working expenses to be 60 per cent of gross earnings (which is an outside estimate), it will take something less than Rs. 24,000 a week in gross receipts to earn 4 per cent on the above capital. At present (1906) the line has scarcely exceeded Rs. 17,000 a week in the busy season: but, with increased rolling stock, there seems no reason why, when the Pench coal-fields and the Bālāghāt, Mandlā and Seonī forests and mineral productions have been thoroughly opened up, the line should not pay handsomely

Cost of construction.

167. The cost of the line per mile was Rs. 47,498, and the mileage in the Bālāghāt District is 52·56; to which must be added the siding to the Bharweli manganese mine, 2·45 miles in length. The gauge is 2′ 6″, the rails weigh 41 lbs. per yard, and are laid on wooden sleepers 5′ × 7″ × 4″ with 12 sleepers to a rail 27′ long; the rolling stock is of the most up-to-date description, all the wagons being bogies, and holding as much as wagons of the same type on the broad gauge. Three types of engines are at present working. The newest

type has a water capacity of 1700 gallons, cylinders 14½" diameter and 18" stroke, and six wheels coupled. The goods engines have eight wheels coupled. All the coaching stock are on underframes 29' 6" long and two four-wheeled bogies. The covered goods wagons are of 16 tons and the open wagons of 17 tons capacity. There are also specially constructed timber and hopper wagons, with a capacity of 18 and 15½ tons respectively; the latter type of wagon is specially designed for the manganese and coal traffic; the bottom of the hopper can be opened by a wheel and screw and the contents allowed to fall through a shoot into the broad gauge wagon at the transhipping station. The ruling gradient is $\frac{1}{80}$ of which the largest stretch (some 1½ miles) occurs just south of Pādriganj station. The minimum curve is 10° or 578 feet radius. The line enters the District over the Bāgh *nadi* bridge, which is the largest railway bridge in the District, and cost Rs. 82,828: it then runs through the Bālāghāt tahsīl, at an average distance of 2 or 3 miles from the left bank of the Waingangā: it cuts through a projecting block of hills at Magardarā, and leaves the Bālāghāt tahsil by a fine bridge over the Nahāra, erected at a cost of Rs. 48,163. From here it continues its course through the narrow Mau valley between the Satpurās and the Waingangā, passing through another outlying spur of the Sātpurās between Lāmta and Nagarwāra by the Hathīpalān pass: and leaves the District a mile or two beyond the bridge over the Poldā, after which the line ceases to follow the Waingangā valley and begins the ascent of the Mandlā plateau.

Results of Sātpurā Railway

168. Up to the present moment, the coming of the railway has not greatly affected the direction of traffic below the ghāts The rice of Karolā and Katangī still goes to Tumsar and Barghāt, as before; and most of the grain from the plain on the left bank of the Wainganga goes direct to Gondia. It is probable, however, that the next few

years will see a great change in this, when the rice traffic sets, as it is ultimately bound to do, more in the Jubbulpore direction. Meantime the grain and forest produce of Baihar mainly find their way to Bālāghāt, Lāmta and Nagarwāra railway stations; the red ochre of the upper Chhattīsgarh zamīndaris is brought to Bālāghat across the hills, instead of to Gondia as used to be the case, and an extensive trade in small timber, bamboos and firewood is springing up between the Lāmta, Charegaon and Samnāpur stations and Nāgpur and Berār.

Possible Railway schemes.

169. It is an interesting question whether the railway follows what is commercially the best line. It is undoubtedly shut in by the Waingangī on the west throughout its entire length in the Bālāghāt District; while the traffic from the Baihar plateau was bound to find its way to the railway, even had the route taken been to the west of the Waingangā. A line from Tumsar to Seonī, *viâ* Katangī, would have handled the Katangī traffic, and have captured the rice trade which at present centres at Barghat. A branch from Katangi to Bālāghàt would have collected all or nearly all the traffic that is at present attracted by the entire length of the line from Birsolā to Lāmta, save the small timber and bamboos from Charegaon and Lāmta: and would have dealt a great deal more effectually than the present alignment with the District manganese deposits and the agricultural traffic of south Karolā. The only objection to this alignment from the railway point of view would have been the shorter length from Seoni to the main line; and this is not a tenable one. A scheme was recently proposed for a narrow-gauge line from Bālāghāt through Katangī and Ramtek to Kamptee, passing through the Katangī, Rāmtek and Bhandāra manganese fields, as a substitute for the proposed broad gauge lines to Kamptee and Katangi: but it was not accepted, owing to the reluctance of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway to undertake so long a length of railway paralleling their existing broad-

gauge line at so short a distance. It is now proposed to bring a line from Tumsar to Katangī to deal with the manganese deposits of that tract: the Banjar valley route for the Mandlā-Bilāspur line has been finally accepted and its construction is not likely to be long delayed. The effect on the timber output of Baihar will be enormously increased and the Rūpjhar manganese field will have a chance of proving its value.

Traffic statistics.

170. The export and import figures of the principal classes of merchandise for stations in the Bālāghāt District between June 1905, when the line opened through to Jubbulpore, and June 1906, are given below in maunds:—

EXPORTS.

| Stations | Wheat. | Rice. | Harrā | Timber and bamboos. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bālāghāt ... | 508 | 10,142 | 21,750 | 30,875 |
| Lāmta ... ... | 360 | 595 | 34,701 | 175,360 |
| Nagarwāra ... | 1,027 | 652 | 6,988 | 19,296 |
| Pādriganj ... | 146 | 8 | 35 | 10,537 |
| Samnāpur... ... | 39 | 156 | 14 | 27,004 |
| Charegaon ... | 56 | 67 | 204 | 40,670 |

IMPORTS.

| Stations. | Cotton twist | Cotton piece-goods. | Salt. | Sugar | Metals. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bālāghāt ... | 1,469 | 2,457 | 9,021 | 1,806 | 2,606 |
| Lāmta ... | ... | 137 | 6,890 | 473 | 508 |
| Nagarwāra ... | 9 | 35 | 2,204 | 52 | ... |
| Pādriganj ... | ... | 6 | 162 | 5 | ... |
| Samnāpur ... | ... | ... | ... | 5 | ... |
| Charegaon ... | ... | ... | 95 | 32 | 14 |

Besides the above, the manganese traffic is exceedingly important. From 1st June 1905 to 3rd June 1906, 60,311 tons, or more than 16¼ lakhs of maunds, were exported from Bālāghāt station. From April 1904 up to the end of May 1905, 25,779 tons were despatched.

The only other important item not included in the above is pulses, for which separate figures are not available. The entirely commercial character of the exports is specially noteworthy, timber, *harrā* and manganese making up almost the entire volume of the exports, and agricultural products being quite unimportant. These last, however, are comparatively slow to develop and there is no doubt but that in the course of time agricultural traffic will be attracted to the cheapest route, and form a steadily growing addition to the railway returns of a more reliable nature than *harrā* or manganese.

Practically all the inward traffic of Lāmta and Nagarwāra is for Baihar, which also draws a large but decreasing share of its salt from Mandlā by road. Allowing for this fact, the import of salt into Baihar considerably exceeds the import through the stations of the Bālāghāt tahsil, which throws an interesting light on the great extent to which the Bālāghāt tahsil is served by the main line stations Tumsar, Gondia and Amgaon.

# CHAPTER VI.

## FORESTS AND MINERALS.

### FORESTS.

Departmental operations.

171. The Government forests of the District are exceedingly important, and the forest division of Balāghāt produces a large revenue. The total area under Government forest in 1904-05 was 972 square miles. The receipts and charges for the same year were.—

| Receipts. | Charges. |
|---|---|
| Rs. | Rs. |
| 1,92,411 | 1,83,893 |

The forests are divided into the ranges of Sonewani, Dhansua, Paraswara, Baihar and Raigarh. Of these Raigarh and Baihar are specially important for their *sāl*: the Paraswara and Dhansua forests, lying along the line of rail, export a good many bamboos and poles to Nagpur, while there is only an ordinary local demand for bamboos and poles from the other ranges. *Tinsa* (*Ougeinia dalbergioides*), *Bija* (*Pterocarpus marsūpium*) and *Dhaura* (*Anogeissus latifolia*) are the most valuable timber trees next to *sāl* and teak, the first named being specially in request for cart poles. There is fine teak in the Pandratola reserve on the Wainganga, an area originally reserved at Colonel Bloomfield's suggestion. The chief features to which the forests owe their importance is the presence of large areas of fine *sāl* in the Raigarh and Baihar ranges. These early attracted the attention of Government, and the Toplā *sāl* block was one of the first to be specially reserved as Government forest. The *sāl* is of a gregarious habit: but the areas covered by it are interrupted by valleys covered with grass and lacking in trees, where, owing to want of protection, the young *sāl* gets no chance to grow, and the seedlings are cut down by frost year after year.

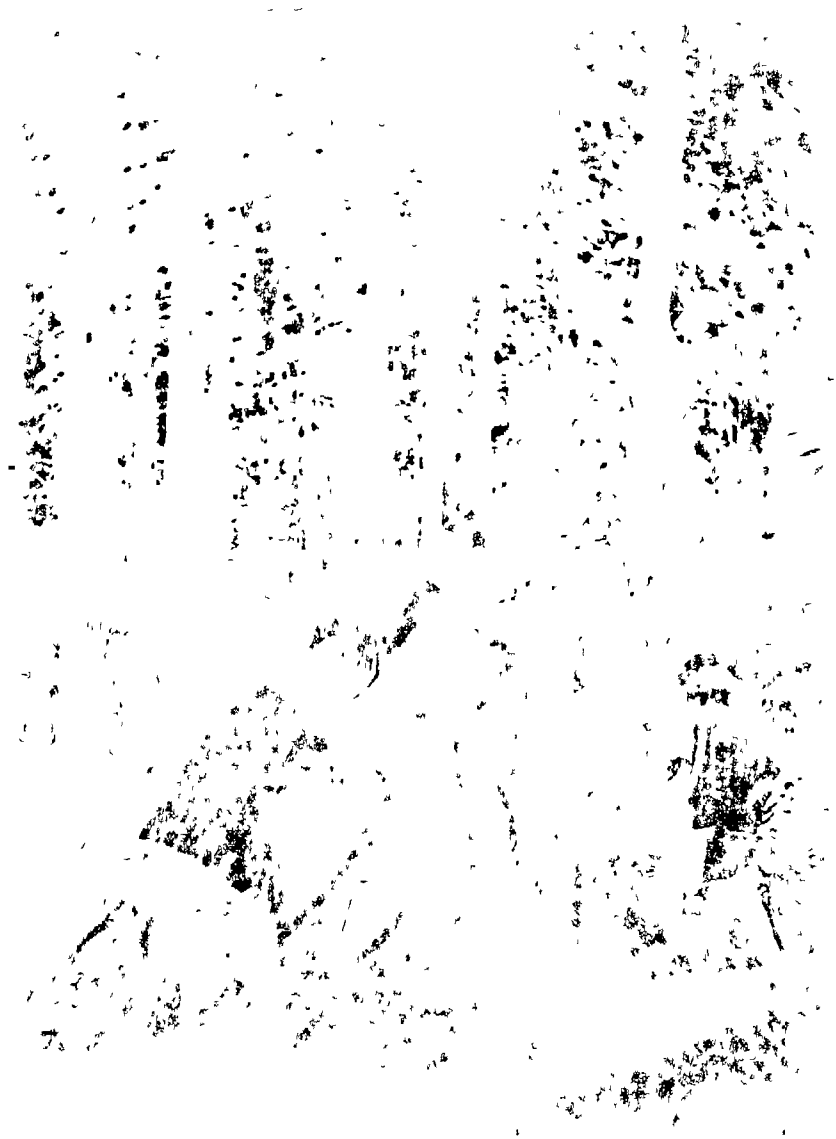



Photo Etching Roorkee College.

SAL SLEEPER WORK.

The tree is equally unable to get a footing on the higher hills, where inferior species always take its place. In 1866 a considerable number of sleepers were taken out of these forests for the Great Indian Peninsular Railway, and attempts have been made from time to time to exploit them, but not on a really large scale until the construction of the Sātpurā Railway. The receipts and expenditure on timber removed departmentally during the last four years are given below:—

| Year. | Receipts. | Expenditure. |
|---|---|---|
| | Rs | Rs. |
| 1901-02 | 88,727 | 99,397 |
| 1902-03 | 1,66,466 | 1,20,416 |
| 1903-04 | 1,61,052 | 1,31.026 |
| 1904-05 | 1,25,530 | 1,15,560 |

The above figures show an average profit of Rs. 18.849 a year. It is a question whether it is a sound policy to dispose of so much timber at such an insignificant profit and whether it would not have been better to await the construction of a railway or tramway through the Baihar plateau

The coming of the Sātpurā railway has put the forests of the lowlands into closer touch with the outside consumer; there are now considerable exports of bamboos, fire-wood and timber to Nagpur and Berār from Samnāpur, Charegāon, Lamta, Nagarwāra and Pādrigānj.

Grazing and commutation

172. No inconsiderable share of the forest income is derived from grazing and commutation dues. There are a certain number of professional graziers in Raigarh who bring up herds from Nāgpur, Chhindwāra and Raipur towards the end of the cold weather; the bulk of the fees however are collected on the village assessment system, partly from ryotwāri and partly from mālguzāri villages. The former have to pay on all cattle (in excess of a free allowance of one animal per three acres

of occupied land) that graze in the Government grazing grounds, whether in the village or in the Government forest; the latter pay only if they send their cattle to the Government forest and are also entitled to a free allowance if agriculturists. So called *nistār* commutation is allowed from certain forests, where there is no effective commercial demand. In return for a payment of 12 annas a plough, cultivators are entitled to take grass, bamboos and small timber for agricultural purposes. The payment for *nistār* also in most places includes payment for '*paidāwār*,' or wild fruits and flowers, such as mahuā and *chār*. The demand for grazing and *nistār* commutation dues was in 1904-05 Rs. 8,723 and Rs. 12,517 respectively.

Works of improvement.

173. Much has been done to improve forest communications in recent years. A ghāt road to Sonewāni from the plain, two roads in the Dhīrimanglī block, improvements to the road to Jaldidānd in Tīpāgarh, and to the Pancherā ghāt; a road from Koilīkhāpa to Chilpī, a road from Khamtolā to Sāwarjhori, a road from Umerdaoni to Khāra, a road from Mukki to Khāpa *viâ* Sondhar and a road from Sukri to Bandhania, another up the Bhaisānghāt to Sukrī, and the improvement of the main Bhaisānghāt pass are the most important works carried out by the Department; a number of tanks have been constructed to water cattle in the hot weather and several rest-houses have been built. Rangers' quarters have been constructed at Charegaon, Dhansuā, Baihar, and Koilīkhāpa. There are forest depôts at Bālāghāt and Lāmta, and rest-houses at the latter place, at Supkhār, Khāpa, Sonawāni, Khāra, Mukki and Sulsuli.

The various articles that constitute what is known as 'Minor Forest Produce' are important and interesting. In the first place comes lac This is the product of an insect, *Coccus lacca*. It grows on the young twigs and shoots of certain trees. The most valuable variety is found on the *kusum* tree (*Schleichera trijuga*) which is not common in the Bālāghāt District. Lac is almost invariably grown in

Bālāghāt on the *palās* tree. The trees can be infected by fastening on to them small twigs covered with the insect, taken from other infected trees. There are two crops, one in the month of December and one at the end of the hot weather. The former is usually considered the more valuable The twigs are cut down and collected and the lac is scraped off them Lac cultivation has not hitherto been systematically undertaken by the Forest Department of the whole Division but the forests have recently been leased out for three years, on terms which, it is hoped, will greatly improve the lac property of the Department.

*Harrā*, or the fruit of the *Terminalia chebula*, is a valuable forest product. The trees are especially abundant in Baihar, but are more numerous and more easy to deal with in the open part of the tahsil than in dense forest. A full crop is not to be expected more often than once every two years. The fruits, known commercially as myrobalans, are collected when they fall by persons licensed by the contractor, who remunerates them according to the amount they collect. Before being placed on the railway, the outer covering of the fruit, which is a drupe, is removed by cracking it with hammer. It is this part alone that is valuable, its chief use being as a tanning material. The Belleric myrobalan (*Terminalia belerica*) is not used for any commercial purpose in this District, but the oil extracted from the kernel is generally eaten by the villagers.

*Katthā* (an extract of *Acacia Catechu*) is not prepared in this District, though the *khair* tree is not infrequent in the more level parts of the west of the Sonewāni range.

*Baichāndi* is the tuber of a yam of *Dioscorea daemona*. It is cut into slices, dried, boiled, and washed for some time in a running stream to remove its nauseous taste, and is then used as a sweetmeat.

*Tīkhur* (*Curcuma angustifolia*) — The tubers are washed, grated to pulp and the fibre removed by further washing, the remaining starch is then dried and sold in a floury state.

It is eaten like arrow-root, boiled with milk. Both this and the last are used by Hindus at various ceremonies. The roots of numerous species of yams and liliaceous plants are also eaten by the forest tribes.

*Banslochan* consists of masses of nearly pure silica, found inside the stems of certain species of bamboo, especially the *kattang*. It is found in two varieties, white and blue, of which the latter is the more esteemed. It is prized as a medicine, being considered valuable as a stimulant.

*Chironjī* is the fruit of the *chār* tree (*Buchanania latifolia*). Both the pulp and the kernel contained in the stone are largely eaten. Other jungle fruits are those of the *ber* (*Zizyphus jujuba*), the *tenāri*, the black berry of a thorny climbing shrub, and the *akol*. The *pambel* or water-bearing creeper (belonging to the Vitidae) is a curiosity. It has a thick, wrinkled and very soft stem; when a piece is cut out of the stem and held hanging downwards, a quantity of quite drinkable water exudes from it.

Private forests.

174. The total area of privately owned forest is not easy to state; the total area in the District given as 'big tree jungle', in the year 1904-05, was 241,865 acres; but no inconsiderable forest revenue is also derived by private owners from the area entered as 'scrub jungle'; much of the lac for instance is grown in this area. The most considerable private forests are those of the Bhānpur, Kīnhi, Sāletekrī and Chauria zamīndāris, which form a continuous block along the south-eastern ghāts, of the Bhādia and Hattā zamīndāris, and of the Mau mālguzāri estate. Besides this, the less cultivated parts of the District at the foot of the hills contain numerous mālguzāri villages, all of a more or less jungly character; and there are several mālguzāri villages along the Waingangā that contain small blocks of moderate teak

There is a little *sāl* in the upper Sāletekrī zamīndāri, probably not exceeding 600 acres in extent, the remains of once much more extensive forests. There are a few blocks of *sāl* in the Kīnhi zamīndāri, near the Son river; and there is a

certain amount of teak still left in the more inaccessible hills of Sāletekrī, Kīnhi, Bhānpur and Chauria, which contain, apart from this, little of value except *bīja*, *dhaurā* and bamboos All these forests have been much damaged by *bewar* cultivation. and by the scarcely less injurious practice of cutting and burning the forest, growing kodon on the ground for three or four years, and then shifting elsewhere. This is only to be distinguished from *bewar* by the use of the plough, and the fact that the same plot is cultivated for rather longer at a time than with *bewar*. The Bhādra forests contain, besides the ordinary *bīja*, *lendia*, *dhaurā* and bamboo, a fair quantity of teak : and are much better preserved than any other zamindāri forest in the District. The zamīndār derives a fine income from his lac.

The principal demand on the zamīndāri forests is from agriculturists, who pay a commutation rate for grazing and *nistār*. Outside purchasers used to get timber at very low rates from the zamīndāris, and only recently the Bījāgarh zamīndār gave a contract in which he allowed all *sāl* or teak trees to be removed at R. 1 a tree and other species at R. 0-8-0.

The mālguzāri forests, being smaller and owned by proprietors more intelligent as a class, are usually better looked after : they are watched, and some attempt is made to prevent them from catching fire. Sylviculture is sometimes attempted in a very humble way, and trees are usually allowed to grow to a fair size before they are cut, but even so the practice of felling at a point 2 or 3 feet above the ground is universal.

In places reasonably accessible from the rail, teak sold in 1905 at R. 0-12-0 a girth foot, *bīja* trees 3 feet and upwards in girth fetched Rs. 2 apiece, bamboos R. 1-8-0 a hundred green, R. 1-4-0 a hundred dry : fuel from R. 0-1-3 to R. 0-4-0 a cart Third-class building poles fetched Rs. 6 a hundred : and first-class building poles (teak) fetched Rs. 2 to Rs. 4 a cartload. The *munhai darakhtan* area in the ryotwāri estate in Baihar covers 45,288 acres in 212 villages. This is the property of Government, and the villagers have hitherto

had no right of user. It is about to be afforested, and made into village forests under Chapter III of the Forest Act, in order to make it of more use to the people, who will be responsible for its management under Government supervision. Part of the area contains valuable *sāl* timber, and will probably be amalgamated with Government reserved forest, where this can be done without inconvenience to the villagers and to the forest administration

Rights in zamindari forests.

175. At the first settlement, zamīndāri forest areas were divided into *fāzil* and *dochand*. The latter were so called because each village had included in it an area of waste, equal to twice the amount of cultivated land that it contained. In mālguzāri areas the remaining forest was declared Government waste, but in zamīndāris it was called *fāzil* jungle, and formed into separate mahals, which were settled with the zamindār, and assessed every three years until the settlement of 1896, when they were settled for the same period as the remainder of the District. The inhabitants of zamīndāri villages have a right to *nistār* from the *dochand* jungle, but if they wish to use the *fāzil* jungle they have to pay *rānwa*, or forest dues. The area set apart as Government waste was found to contain no private rights of any description. It was afforested in 1879, after the passing of the Indian Forest Act

MINERALS.

Minerals.

176 At present, manganese is by far the most important mineral in the District. An account of its distribution will be found in the chapter on Geology, but in view of the importance of the industry and of the interest taken in it by local prospectors, it seems desirable to add here a brief description of the uses of the metal and of the origin and development of the industry in India. The account is based on facts and figures kindly supplied by Mr. W. H. Clark, M.I.M.E., A I.M.M., Manager, Central Provinces Pros-

pecting Syndicate, and on a paper read by Mr. L. L. Fermor, A. R. S. M., F. G. S., before the Mining and Geological Institute of India in March 1906.

The chief commercial uses of manganese are first of all, to form an alloy with iron, copper and other metals, secondly, as an oxidizer in the manufacture of bleaching powder and certain disinfectants, and lastly, as a colouring material for glass and pottery, and in the manufacture of green and violet paints. In all probability at least 90 per cent of the world's production of manganese is consumed in the manufacture of iron and steel Prior to its use for this purpose the demand was practically restricted to the form of ore known as pyrolusite (peroxide of manganese), which was used in the manufacture of bleaching powder and for decolorising glass. This form has been found only in one place in the District, the Bodrāghāt: it is also found at Pāli in Nāgpur and at Pawardongri in Bhandāra. The invention of the Bessemer process in 1855 made manganese a necessary ingredient in the manufacture of steel. The precise use of manganese in this process is not easily intelligible to the ordinary reader without some explanation, to which the general interest in the manganese industry of the Central Provinces may perhaps allow a place in this work. The chief use of manganese in the iron and steel industry is for the preparation of the alloys with iron known as spiegel-eisen and ferro-manganese. Spiegel-eisen contains up to 27 per cent. of manganese, and 4 to 5 per cent. of carbon, and ferro-manganese from 27 to 86 per cent. of manganese and 6 to 7 per cent of carbon. These alloys are used in the manufacture of mild steel for which there are four well-known processes:—

1. The Bessemer process.
2. The Thomas-Gilchrist or basic Bessemer process.
3. The Siemens or acid open-hearth process.
4. The basic open-hearth process.

In processes Nos. 1 and 2 air is blown through molten pig iron contained in a vessel known as a converter. The

chief difference between these two processes lies in the lining, which is made of an acid material such as ganister in the acid process, and of a basic lining such as burnt dolomite, cemented with tar, in the basic. For the acid process pig, low in phosphorus, is necessary, whilst for the basic process the pig should be high in phosphorus. In either case the effect of the blow is to remove most of the carbon and silicon, and in the basic process the phosphorus also, these elements combining with the oxygen of the air blown in. In the acid process, when the blow is finished, spiegel-eisen or ferro-manganese are added to the molten iron in the converter, which is then turned down, and its contents poured into a casting ladle, from which the steel is run into moulds. In the basic process the ferro or spiegel are added to the molten metal in the ladle.

In the open hearth process the pig iron is melted on the hearth of a gas-heated regenerative reverberatory furnace, scrap iron being usually added as well. The decarbonisation of the iron is effected by the addition of ferric oxide in the form of hematite, the oxygen of which combines with carbon in the cast iron. When the charge is finished, the metal is run out into a ladle, when the spiegel or ferro is added. From this ladle the steel thus formed is run out into moulds. As in the Bessemer processes, the distinction between the acid and basic processes lies in the character of the lining used for the hearth, and in the fact that the pig used for the acid process must be low in phosphorus, whilst that for the basic process should be high in this constituent.

In either case the effect of the addition of the manganese alloy is the same, namely, (1) to add the carbon required to convert the molten iron into steel, (2) to remove into the slag as manganese oxide any oxygen contained in the metal. From experiment it was found that pig-iron with from 1 per cent to 2 per cent of phosphorus could be worked into steel with only 0·1 per cent of phosphorus.

The tabular statement on the next page will give a clear idea of the process.

| | Original metal from cupola. | After blowing for ten minutes | After 2 mins. after-blow. | After addition of Spiegel-eisen. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Carbon ... | 3·276 | 0·590 | 0·026 | 0·302 |
| Silicon .. | 0·476 | 0·022 | 0·002 | 0·016 |
| Manganese ... | 1·131 | 0·122 | 0·197 | 0·540 |
| Phosphorus .. | 2·600 | 2·061 | 0·062 | 0·092 |
| Sulphur ... | 0·062 | 0·139 | 0·051 | 0·040 |

By far the greater proportion of the manganese introduced into the iron is blown off or disappears as slag, as will be seen from the above statement. The presence of phosphorus is undesirable, as more than a very small proportion of it tends to make steel cold-short. It is for this reason that an excess of phosphorus renders manganese ores less valuable, or absolutely unsaleable. The mild steel manufactured by the Pennsylvania Railway Company shows on assay the following :—

| | | | | Per cent. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Phosphorus | under | ... | ... | 0·10 |
| Silicon | ,, | ... | ... | 0·04 |
| Carbon | ,, | ... | ... | 0·30 |
| Manganese | ,, | ... | ... | 0·35 |

The table below taken from Bauerman's Metallurgy exhibits the effect of varying proportions of manganese on the physical properties of steel of approximately constant proportions of carbon and phosphorus :—

| Carbon. | Phosphorus | Manganese. | Tons per square inch | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | F. | E. | T. |
| 0·450 | 0·067 | 0·528 | ... | 17·3 | 34·3 |
| 0·467 | 0·072 | 1·060 | ... | 22·7 | 41·3 |
| 0·515 | 0·061 | 1·305 | 5·4 | 27·6 | 52·4 |
| 0·560 | 0·058 | 2·008 | 5·8 | 30·9 | 62·7 |

F—Breaking stress of bars 39½" between the points of support and loaded in the middle.

E—Limit of elasticity.

T.—Tensile strength.

Besides the use of manganese in the above processes, the alloy known as manganese steel, which contains percentages of from 7 per cent. to 20 per cent. of manganese, is valuable from its extreme hardness and toughness and is used for the jaws of crushing and rock-breaking machinery.

The demand for manganese was at first supplied from Spain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, and the United States of America and Chili, but principally from the Caucasus, the manganese of which district is known as Poti manganese owing to its being exported from that port. The rise of the Indian manganese trade is due to Mr. Turner of the Madras Civil Service, who succeeded in putting on the market some manganese from Vizagapatam in the year 1892-93, though with much difficulty, owing to its being somewhat phosphatic, the percentage of phosphorus in the ore being as high as ·23. The introduction of the basic process, however, rendered it possible to deal with ores of this character. In 1899 a Syndicate, which had been formed to exploit the Vizianagram manganese, was induced by the statement in Ball's Geology of India, to prospect the manganese in the Central Provinces, which led to the opening up of the Mansar deposit and the discovery of that of Kāndri Work was first started at Mansar in 1899, and the first cargo of 4,000 tons of C. P. manganese was shipped in May 1900. In the last named year the extensive Bharwelī deposit became known to the Syndicate, owing to the P. W. D. using ore quarried from the Bharwelī spur for road metal. Ore was first shipped from the Bharwelī deposit in the Bālāghāt District in 1901. The exports from the Central Provinces have been as follows :—

| Year | | Tons. | Price per unit. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1900 | . | 35,356 | 1*s.* to 1*s.* 3*d.* |
| 1901 | ... | 44,428 | 10½*d.* |
| 1902 | ... | 89,609 | 10½*d.* |
| 1903 | ... | 101,554 | Under 10½*d.* |
| 1904 | ... | 85,034 | Under 10½*d.* |
| 1905 | ... | 153,494 | From 10½ to 8¾*d.* |

In 1906 the price rose to 1*s.* 4*d.* owing to the Russian labour troubles putting an end to the export of Poti manganese, with the result of a vast expansion of the Indian industry.

The Central Provinces Prospecting Syndicate soon had imitators; in 1902 other companies who had observed their success followed them, and there are now two large companies, the Indian Manganese Company and the Central Indian Mining Company at work, besides a host of other firms, mostly Mārwāri speculators, who sell free on rail and are as a rule unskilful miners who pay little regard to the analysis of the ore Ore was exported from Tirori and Ukwā in 1906, but the industry is at present much hampered by lack of transport facilities for the Katangī and Baihar fields. A line from Tumsar to Katangī, and another from Mandlā to Bilāspur through Baihar, with a siding to Ukwā or a ghāt tramway through Laugur to Bālāghāt, will go far to remove these difficulties: all these works are likely to be started at no distant date.

The prevailing types of manganese of the Bālāghāt District are as follows.—

Bharwelī contains psilomelane, about 51½ per cent in manganese, low in phosphorus, and a finely crystalline light grey ore, which has been found to be a variety of hollandite, a crystalline manganate. The reef runs away into a bed of highly siliceous manganese ore. The Samnāpur, Ukwā and Gudmā ore is both psilomelane and braunite, but very high in phosphorus in some places

The Ramrama deposit consists of a mixture of braunite and psilomelane, with from 40 to 51 per cent of manganese and from 5 to 17 per cent of iron. Phosphorus is somewhat high in the deposits of Katangi pargana. The percentages of manganese vary, but are not believed greatly to exceed 50 anywhere, while phosphorus is as a rule somewhat high. The most important deposit exists at Tirorī and Paonia, where the ore is coarsely crystalline braunite with psilomelane.

The ore is quoted in the mineral trade in three grades according to the percentage of manganese :—

40 and upwards, 3rd grade.

45 and upwards, 2nd grade.

50 and upwards with less than ·15 or ·10 per cent of phosphorus, 1st grade.

The Indian ores are practically free from sulphur and arsenic, and the better class ores now being shipped from the Central Provinces are probably unsurpassed among the ores of the world for quality. The percentage of moisture, under 1 per cent, is very low, and a hard ore in large lumps is always preferred by steel manufacturers to a soft earthy ore like that of Potī; phosphorus up to ·25 per cent is allowable; ore containing more than that is only saleable at a considerable reduction in price. Some buyers allow three pence for every unit of iron above a certain percentage: but manganiferous iron ore like that of Maisur or Jubbulpore is not nearly so valuable as manganese ore.

The highest grade ore found in Bharweli runs as high as 55 per cent. in manganese, while Kandrī in the Nāgpur District surpasses this by two or three points. Chemically pure braunite contains 63·59 and pyrolusite 63·2 per cent. of manganese, the balance being oxygen and, in the case of braunite, oxygen and silicon. The theoretical maximum of psilomelane is 67·35 per cent. It is usual for sellers who have more than one mine, to grade their ores by systematic sampling and chemical analysis, so as to bring as much ore as possible into the category of first grade ores by adjusting the phosphorus or silica contents of the ore

The average analysis of Central Provinces ores was stated to be as follows :—

Manganese 50—55, Phosphorus ·05—0·12, Iron 5—8, Silica 5—9, Water below 1·0

The principal companies sell *c. i. f.*[1] in Europe or America while small native concessionaires sell sometimes

[1] Freight and insurance paid by seller.

Photo. Etching. Roorkee College.

BHARWELI MINE.

free on railway, sometimes free on storage ground in Bombay. Most manganese is despatched *viâ* Bombay, as whole cargoes from there are available at far lower rates than from Calcutta, though manganese is often shipped from Calcutta in part cargoes at low rates, more or less as ballast. Freights from Bombay as a rule vary between 15 and 20 shillings per ton for Europe, and 16 shillings and 6 pence to 22 shillings for America. At present (August 1906) they stand at 16 shillings whole and 14 to 15 shillings part cargoes to England or Europe.

The ore at Bharweli is extracted from open quarries, and after the silica has been removed by hand cleaning is transported by incline waggons, each holding a ton of ore, to a railway siding. Bharwelī can at present deliver at the siding 400 tons a day with its three inclines, but, when that number has been raised to five as is proposed, the amount exported will be far larger. The rail charges are at present $\frac{1}{10}$ of a pie per maund per mile. After delivery at Bombay the manganese is dumped from the railway waggons and carted to the dock, where it is again dumped and taken on board by buckets attached to the ship's slings. A line of railway is now being constructed from Prince's Dock to the storage ground, when it will be possible for the ship's buckets to remove the ore direct from the waggon, thus saving the second dumping. One dumping will probably be always necessary, as with so long a lead some provision for storage is practically inevitable.

The recent exports of manganese from the Bālāghāt District have been as follows :—

1904-05— 20,977 tons.

1st quarter of 1905-06—10,337 tons

The number of workers employed on the Bharweli mine at the end of 1905 was 1,237, but the number has since risen as high as 2,000, and the exports have touched 10,000 tons a month.

The bauxite deposits in Baihar are at the present moment being investigated, and, if it proves possible to work

them at a profit, will prove of more importance to the District than manganese, as the metal (aluminium) will be extracted locally. Coal is needed to roast the ore in the first place, and some cheap form of power, preferably hydraulic, to generate electricity for the extraction of the metal. The future of this industry however is too uncertain to warrant any detailed description of the process.

Mica has not been worked, though concessions for this mineral were applied for as long ago as 1869, and again in 1904.

A good deal of red ochre comes to Bālāghāt town, or passes through the District to Gondia from the Thākurtolā zamīndāri in the Raipur District, but the ochre deposits in Bālāghāt (Sāletekrī zamīndāri) are not yet worked, and the mineral is rather too hard to be of much use.

Iron is extracted by the Agarias from laterite in the Bhānpur and Kinhi zamīndāris, but to an insignificant extent only.

Lime is principally procured from the limestone nodules (*chunkankarī*) that are found in black or brown soil in most parts of the District. A white shale useful as chalk or as china clay is found in Sāletekrī.

A marble, white or white with green veins, occurs at Godrī near Bhānpur.

Besides these there is no specially valuable variety of building stone produced in the District. In most parts gneiss and laterite are used for this purpose, but are not exported.

The number of mineral concessions applied for and granted were:—

| | | Applied for. | Granted. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1904 | ... | 11 | 3 |
| 1905 | ... | 10 | 5 |

In consequence of the heavy mineral trade along the railway, special arrangements have been made at Gondia for transhipment and a special type of hopper waggon has been supplied for the traffic.

## CHAPTER VII.

## FAMINE.

Famine history.

177. The Bālāghāt District has enjoyed an unenviable reputation of late years for famines and especially the Karolā and Katangī tracts. The principal crop failures of recent years occurred in 1868, in 1896 and the preceding year, in 1899 and in 1902.

Famine of 1869.

178. In 1868, the open season from January to May was broken by an unusual amount of cloudy and rainy weather, and the rains began very early, no less than 10·6 inches falling in the month of June. Only 2 or 3 inches fell in the last fortnight of June and the first fortnight of July The total fall of July was 9·2 inches, of August 12·7 inches and of September 5·4 inches. The unusually early sowings were severely affected by the drought in June and July, and considerable resowings had to be undertaken, which were rendered possible by the fall after the middle of July. The second drought in July and August again withered the seedlings, but a fall towards the end of September prevented a total failure. An absence of cold weather rains destroyed most of the *rabi* crops. The total cultivated area of this District in 1868-69 was 214,587 acres, of which 83 per cent was under rice. The failure, though severe, was very unequal, outturns varying from fair to *nil* being returned from adjoining villages.

Prices began to rise in August, and in September sales had in many cases ceased; some executive pressure was accordingly employed to induce mālguzārs to open their grain bins, and considerable purchases were made by Government for poorhouses and relief works, while the balance was sold in the market at current rates. The fall of rain towards the end of September restored the confidence of grain-dealers

and to some extent relieved the pressure. Work had been going on all along on the five ghāt roads leading to the uplands; the number employed is said to have stood at 2602 in July 1868 and to have risen to 27,759 by May 1869; while the average monthly numbers were 9678. It is doubtful, however, whether the figures refer to the maximum number of persons employed at any one time or to the total number of persons employed during the month. A poorhouse was opened at the District headquarters in April 1869 and kept open until December; the maximum daily average attendance was 144 in August. The District was patrolled, and starving wanderers taken care of and forwarded to the poorhouse, where they were fed and cared for, and afterwards drafted on to works. About Rs. 5820 were advanced to mālguzars for various village improvements. Most labourers left the Government works in June 1869, but the delay in the arrival of the rains caused many of them to return again. The import of large quantities of grain by boat along the Wainganga, as soon as the rains rendered it navigable, tended to keep down prices at the most difficult time of the year. The numbers in the poorhouse did not rise above 35 per diem until June 1869, and the labouring classes were up to that time in fair condition. During the rains of 1869 the numbers rose, while some deaths from starvation were reported from the District Some 80 dead bodies were picked up by the police, and it is probable that all these deaths were due directly or indirectly to famine. Mālguzārs were, however, held strictly responsible that no deaths from starvation were allowed to occur in their villages There was some increase of crime, though no great outbreak appears to have taken place. The inmates of the poorhouse, who were principally Mahārs, were employed on spinning, collecting drift wood, road repairs, and grinding corn for private persons. With the ripening of the early crops in September, distress was greatly alleviated, and it seems to have disappeared with the harvest of that year.

179. The years from the partial failure of 1886-87 to the beginning of the dry seasons in 1895-96 seem to have been on the whole a period of heavy rainfall and considerable prosperity, save that the two years, 1892-93 and 1893-94, were seasons of serious loss in Raigarh, where the staple crops were then wheat and gram. The severe attack of rust which came with these two seasons of excessive late rainfall practically caused the disappearance of *rabi* crops from Raigarh, and left this unfortunate tract in much worse case to meet the ensuing cycle of dry years than the rest of the District.

Seasons prior to 1897.

The outturns of the two years 1894-95 and 1895-96 are stated to have been only 55 and 52 respectively for all crops. The September rainfall in the latter of these two years was only 1·64 inches, though the total for the year was 62 inches against an average for the District of 64 inches.

180. The monsoon of 1896-97 opened well, and up to the middle of August 50 inches had fallen; the fields were full of water and the people, fearing damage to their rice, allowed the water to drain off. But after that the season entirely changed · and only 1 18 inches of rain fell in September and none in October The copious rains of the cold weather were of little use to a District that relies for its *rabi* on a second crop following rice.

Famine of 1897

The tanks, however, were fairly well filled from the heavy rainfall of the early monsoon, and the fullest use was made of them, 58.539 acres being irrigated. This area gave a fair crop, but the remainder of the 269,000 acres of rice grown that year can have given very little outturn, the average yield of all crops being only 20. The previous bad seasons had, moreover, so reduced the agricultural resources of the District that the total cropped area had fallen from 492,000 acres in 1893-94 to 371,000 in 1896-97, and the rice area from 341,000 acres to 269,000 in the same period. The effect of this sudden and unprecedented failure was

disastrous. Since the coming of the railway, stocks had remained low, and export had denuded the District of the large stores existing in the old days when cultivators kept their savings in the form of grain. A sudden demand from outside the District added to the general alarm; prices went up with a rush from 13 to 9 seers in the month of October, and they continued to rise till in the following August they stood at 6½ seers. In Baihar stocks were depleted and prices just before the rains stood at 4 seers; however, the large importations of Rangoon rice saved the situation and the actual lack of grain only lasted for a short time.

Crime.

181. Vague rumours of the grain riots in Nāgpur made their way into the District, and contributed further to the popular unrest and excitement, but no serious consequences ensued. Imports of grain began in February and continued till September 1897, when the new crop eased the situation.

There was a serious increase in the crime of the District, offences against property, which numbered 204 in the month of October, rising to 260 in March; crime abated to some extent in April, May and June, but the monthly figure again rose to 281 in July and 255 in August.

The theft of cattle for purposes of food, technical dacoities committed by a number of persons from one village banding themselves together to loot the grain bins of a neighbouring village, and ordinary thefts and house-breakings were the chief form of crime. Cattle thefts in 1895 were 62, an unusually high figure; in 1896 they rose to 176 and in 1897 to 616.

There was no particular lack of fodder, and the decrease in stock was due, not to the death of cattle from lack of fodder, but to the owners being led to sell their cattle or being unable to buy fresh ones to replace ordinary losses.

Relief works

182. Relief works under the Public Works Department were started in November and the numbers employed on these rose till in

May they reached 48,000. In June they fell sharply to 25,000, but the labour market was evidently unable to stand the sudden extra supply, and numbers rose again to 30,000 in July. Road works were not finally closed till after the end of the year. In the earlier part of 1897 a large amount of labour was employed on village works financed by Government loans, of which Rs 17,400 was advanced as Land Improvement loans, and Rs. 1,33,320 as special famine loans. The maximum number so employed was 17,000, in the month of February. Very little was done in the way of special relief to weavers, as the local weavers were able to work on ordinary forms of relief.

Other forms of relief.

183. Turning to gratuitous relief, the greatest number of dependents on relief was 10,664 in the month of May. Poorhouses were opened by private subscription in September 1896 and were continued at Government expense. The maximum number of inmates was 1,600 in the month of March, after which they began to be drafted on to relief works or village relief. Village relief, or the payment of cash doles on a list prepared for each village by the patwári, was started in April. Payments were as far as possible made weekly. The maximum number relieved was 13,405 in October 1897, and the total cost was Rs. 1,21,285. Kitchens were not opened till September 1897, when 47 were started, relieving 1,247 persons. Extensive grants totalling Rs. 3,33,322 were received from the Mansion House Fund. Seed loans aggregating Rs. 2,28,557 were given out to cultivators. In Baihar seed was purchased and distributed for sowing, but much of it was found quite unsuitable, being the seed of slow ripening Bengal varieties. The total cost of the famine was Rs 13,26,805.

Mortality.

184. The mortality statistics of the famine afford unpleasant reading. The death-rate in August 1896 was 5·86; in November it fell to 4·33, after which it rose steadily (aided by an outbreak

of cholera in May) till in August it reached 11·10. The deduced population at the end of 1897 was 358,000, whereas, had it expanded at the normal rate, it should have been 414,000. There is no doubt but that nearly all the extra mortality was due to a lack of proper food; and much of it might no doubt have been avoided, had relief been started earlier and been more thoroughly organised. Still, the administration of the famine of 1897 was a great advance on anything of the sort ever attempted in the District before; and there is little doubt but that, had the disaster of 1896-97 attacked the District with no better organisation than it possessed in 1868-69, the loss of life would have been appalling. The famine of 1896-97 was the first real test of the land record staff under famine conditions and it was not found wanting.

Seasons prior to 1900.

185. The years following the famine of 1896-97 were unfavourable. The area cropped in 1897-98 was extremely short, and owing to the sowing of foreign seed, which was unsuitable to local conditions, the yield was poor. The area sown in 1898-99 was also very short, being only 69 per cent. of normal; the crop was not very good, owing to the light September rainfall, and by the rains of 1899 considerable arrears of *takāvi* and land revenue had accrued. The state of depression into which the agriculturists of Karolā and Katangi had fallen was most intense. Land could hardly be sold; large areas were out of cultivation and the people had fallen into a state of hopeless apathy. At that time there was no prospect of a generous irrigation policy, and crop failures were not met by the same willingness on the part of Government to remit its demand which characterises the present revenue policy, and which sad experience has shown to be the only course possible in the face of a long continued series of bad harvests.

Famine of 1900.

186. The rainfall of 1899 was quite phenomenally short. The fall of the early months of the monsoon was unusually bad, only 28

inches being recorded up to the end of August against an average of 50 inches: and, though the rainfall of 1902-03 for the same period was worse and that of 1904-05 very little better, each of these years had a fair September fall. In 1899 the September rain was only 1·59 inches; no more was received in October or November, and the total late monsoon fall was 1·59 inches against an average of 11·51. The total fall was 33·08 against an average of 64·87 The early rain had not been enough to fill the tanks, so that irrigation was inadequate and confined to a very small area, only 16,190 acres being recorded as irrigated during that year, and much even of this did not receive water enough to save the crop.

The result was, as may be imagined, disastrous in the extreme The yield of the rice crop was returned at 15 only, kodon at 55, *tūr* at 50, and til, which is not important in this District, at 100. If the irrigated area be deducted, the yield of the rest of the rice crop was practically *nil* Transplanting was as a rule impossible and the seeds withered in the nurseries. *Rabi*, which in this District is mostly a double crop after rice, was an almost equally complete failure.

One result of so early and complete a failure of the crops following on a period of bad years was that there was never at any time any doubt as to the necessity of early and extensive relief. This and the admirable organisation with which the famine was met from the start were the main causes of the great success which attended the famine measures of 1899-00.

Prices.

187. The price of rice up to July 1899 stood at 21 seers; though local crops had been poor in 1898, there had been a good crop elsewhere, especially in Chhattīsgarh As the failure gradually declared itself from the beginning of August, prices rose till in November they stood at 7½ seers. Throughout the open season of 1899-00 they stood at 8 seers in Bālāghāt and 10 seers in Baihar, where the failure was not quite so complete and the kodon crop was relatively more important. Foreign rice came

into the District in November and was sold at 10 seers till May, when the difficulty of transport during the rains from Gondia caused the price to rise to 8¾ and later to 8 seers By the following November prices had fallen to 10 seers, and, after the new season's rice came to market, to 13 seers. Foreign rice was sold in every part of the District; it came in by rail *viâ* Gondia and Tumsar, and some Mandlā rice was sold in Baihar. Seed-grain was available from the stores of local mālguzārs and from adjoining Districts Some of it was new seed grown in protected areas, but most was seed of one year old. The Lānji pargana yielded some small amount of grain in 1899-00 which was sold for seed. Only in Katangī was any Bengal or Chhattīsgarh seed used.

Effect on people.

188. Crime, though not nearly so severe as in 1896-97, was yet markedly in excess of ordinary years: and the figures were highest for those months in which relief was most freely resorted to. As usual the most marked rise was in respect of cattle theft, the figures for which were 176, as against 17 in the preceding and 43 in the following year. The emigration to Assam was greater in this year than in 1896-97. The figures for the two famines were 1896, 2,081; 1897, 2,085; and from October 1899 to July 1900, 3,344, mostly of the Gond, Gowara and Marār castes. Not many people went to Berār, the cotton crop there having proved a failure. Cattle mortality was severe; owing to the deficient rainfall there was a lack of fodder and water, to a far greater extent than in any previous famine, and the deaths of cattle from all causes amounted to over 25,000 head.

Relief works

189. Six camps under the Public Works Department were opened in October, which were increased to 10 in the hot weather and were gradually reduced in number during the rains, till the last was closed in October 1900. The maximum number on Public Works relief was 56,266 in February. Many persons were away collecting *harrā* in December and January

and in June a number of cultivators left the camps to plough their fields, returning to the works for a month or so afterwards. Road construction and earth work for the Sātpurā railway were the principal forms of work. A good number of persons were employed on village works, especially in the hot weather. A total of 218 tanks were repaired, at a cost of Rs. 1,01,454; the maximum number so employed was 11,012 in the month of May. The works were done on the piece-work system under the charge of the village mukaddams.

Forest works were of great assistance in meeting distress among the aboriginal tribes. In the cold weather grass cutting employed some 1,640 persons; 834 tons of grass were collected and stored at 18 depôts: and, later on, employment was found on forest roads. The distribution of gratuitous relief in forest villages was, like the last-named works, in the hands of the Forest Department. The system known as "B list" relief, *viz.*, the payment of cash doles to persons capable of work and their employment on agricultural labour under the orders of the mukaddam was extensively practised in the District: as many as 26,190 persons being on this form of work in September 1900. No relief was given to weavers from Government funds, though the purchase of locally made cloth for distribution from charitable funds was of much assistance to the weavers of the District.

Gratuitous relief.

190. No poorhouses were needed; but starving wanderers were passed on to kitchens by the police, and orphans and beggars made some use of kitchen buildings as shelters. Kitchen relief was started in September 1899, and carried on till November 1900. The maximum number of kitchens opened was 282 in November, and the maximum number of persons relieved thereat was 85,486. The numbers greatly increased in the rains of 1900, when kitchens were freely opened. A good deal of reluctance was shown by several of the higher castes, and even by the Mahārs in certain places, in allowing their children to attend in spite of caste cooks being provided. Kitchen relief was the

great feature of the famine of 1900, and the extensive opening of kitchens in the rains, if it afforded gratuitous relief to some who might have earned it for themselves, was at any rate a sure preventive against the terrible mortality and general falling off in the physical condition of the people that took place in 1897. Cash relief given gratuitously on village lists was proportionately less prominent, the maximum number being reached in November 1899 with 24,367. When famine works had been fairly started, this number was greatly reduced, and after January 1900 it never rose much over 13,000. The entire land revenue of the District throughout the year 1899-00 was suspended and subsequently remitted; and Rs. 36,000 of revenue and cesses outstanding from before the rains of 1899 were also written off.

*Takāvi* distribution was carried out on a most liberal scale. A sum of Rs. 67,806 was distributed in October 1899 but owing to the failure of the *rabi* crop of 1899-00 this money was practically all thrown away. Rupees 1,80,000 were given out as *kharif* loans in May 1900, and Rs. 1,05,000 were distributed from the charitable fund. Seed-grain at this time was selling at from Rs. 8 to Rs. 10 a *khandī*.

General management of famine operations.

191. The famine operations of the District were directed by seven charge officers with assistants, under whom were 15 circle officers who were responsible for the distribution of money, the detailed administration of village works, gratuitous relief and kitchens The total expenditure on famine relief up to November 1900 was Rs. 26,19,944. The maximum number of persons on relief was 134,891 in the month of August, or 35·1 per cent. of the population. The highest death-rate in any one month was 7·07 in July 1900 based on the deduced population, but much of this was due to an outbreak of cholera. The total death-rate per mille for the year was 41·25, a great contrast to the figure of 95·40 reached in 1897 If it be judged by its fulfilment of the task of saving human life, the famine organisation of the year

1899-00 was probably almost as completely successful as will ever be possible. The only losses which the measures then adopted were unable to deal with were the heavy cattle mortality and the decline in the cropped area; the falling off in the latter being from 373,423 acres in 1898-99 to 343,604 in 1900-01. It is doubtful whether either of these could have been prevented, save at an expense which the end gained would hardly have warranted.

The census figures rendered it possible to form some estimate of the losses in population caused by the famines. The population deduced by adding and subtracting births and deaths from the figures of 1891 was more by 34,254 than the figures of the census of 1901, which showed a decrease of 56,869 over the present area of the District from the previous census figures. Some 10,000 of this deficiency certainly, and probably several thousands more are due to emigration to Assam. Much of the rest can be ascribed to emigration to Berār. But there was also no doubt not a little under-reporting of deaths in 1897, especially in the rains. This serious decrease of 56,869 persons is directly traceable to the bad years preceding the census, and accounts to a large extent for the present shortage of labour. Naturally the poorest were the first to feel the pinch and the first to succumb to it.

Seasons prior to 1902.

192. The cycle of misfortunes, however, had not yet exhausted itself. In 1900-01 crops were poor, especially in Karolā, and some remissions of revenue were necessary and also some cash relief in the rains. The total famine expenditure in this year was Rs. 12,842. Further remissions were necessary in the next year, which was again unfavourable and the agricultural classes had been reduced to such a state of poverty and indebtedness that the conciliation proceedings described in Chapter VI had to be undertaken.

Crop failure of 1902.

193. The monsoon of 1902-03 began unusually late, less than an inch of rain falling in June. The rainfall up to the end of August

was lower even than in 1899, only 23·56 inches being recorded. A fall of 7·04 inches in September just saved the crop from being the absolute and complete failure that marked the former year. Baihar had a fall of 50 inches, and the crop there was not a bad one: besides, the lighter *kharīf* crops gave outturns greatly superior to the rice. In the black soil areas, where broadcast sowings were more extensive, results were a little better, but the transplanted rice withered in its nurseries and as a rule gave no outturn at all. The District was thus confronted with a complete failure over most of the Bālāghāt tahsīl, and there was every reason to apprehend a severe famine, except that the extent of the crop failure was comparatively small, being limited to a few Districts, while the wheat and cotton tracts to the north and east had the promise of a bumper harvest. The result was a testimony to the extreme importance of the extent as well as of the severity of a failure of crops. Prices hardly rose till June and July, when the demand for seed-grain forced them up. There was moreover, great scope for employment both inside and outside the District. Owners of carts could send them to Toplā to carry sleepers, while the bountiful cotton harvests of Berār called loudly for labour. The Berār labour market affords prolonged employment, and people leave the District in November and stay on in Berār, after the cotton crop is over, on miscellaneous labour; while the wages average 5 annas a day for a common cooly. The plentiful wheat harvest in Seoni gave employment to the people of Katangī and Karolā. Thus, much to the surprise of most of the local officers, it proved unnecessary to undertake any regular operations for famine relief. Work was started on two large Government tanks and on a number of grant-in-aid tanks under the Irrigation Department. The maximum number on these works was never much in excess of 1,500. A little road construction was started, but not as a famine work. Loans under the Land Improvement Loans Act were advanced, and works undertaken from this and from other private sources, which employed as

much as 2,800 persons at one time. The total on all classes of works reached 5,775 in April, after which it declined. The total amount charged as famine relief in this year was Rs. 5,930. The maximum number of persons on gratuitous relief was 843 or ·25 per cent. of the population; besides which, 661 persons were at one time relieved by their fellow villagers. Very extensive remissions of Government dues were made during the year, no less than Rs. 2,22,377 of land revenue and Rs. 3,30,165 of *takāvi* demand being written off. A sum of Rs. 1,10,000 was advanced to the people for *kharīf* sowings, and Rs. 5,000 for *rabi*. The annual death-rate on the reputed population was 25·58. The next year, 1903-04, gave a bumper rice harvest all over the District and the people were able to pay back the entire *takāvi* demand, including large sums suspended from former years, in full.

General remarks.

194. Since then, no crop failure on an extensive scale has occurred in the District, and this is a fitting point at which to consider the general famine question as it affects Bālāghāt. Generally speaking, practically the whole of the Bālāghat tahsīl and a good deal of Baihar can be protected in all but years of complete failure of the rainfall, by irrigation works. The scanty population and extensive forests of Baihar with its lighter class of cropping make it less dependent on the rice crop than the Bālāghat tahsil. The annual migration from Lānji and Katangi to Berār, and from Karolā, Katangī and Baihar to Seonī and Mandlā for the *rabi* harvest are factors to be taken into account in every famine. Local failures, unaccompanied by a rise in prices, or even when prices rise as high as 10 seers for common rice, are not likely to cause any privation in the District, so long as the present demand for labour exists: and there is no sign of its diminishing for many years to come, at any rate so long as irrigation, road, and railway construction works are in hand, and the mining industry continues to flourish. The maximum number for which relief may have to be provided is not likely under the

above conditions to exceed 20 per cent. of the population, unless a very widespread disaster affects the general demand for labour. This figure may, in view of what has been said, above, seem a high one, but, as pointed out in the Provincial Report on the famine of 1899-00, rice Districts contain far more small tenants who live by labour, than do the wheat or cotton Districts; and this class will come on relief almost as soon as labourers pure and simple. The total losses to the District during the cycle of famine years have been exceptional. It was calculated that in the pargana of Katangī alone the total famine losses to the people and to Government during the ten years 1894-95 to 1903-04 were 53 lakhs and 9 lakhs respectively. The total famine losses to Government over the whole District, from famine relief, remissions and suspensions, and loss of income, amounted to no less than 59 lakhs. A calculation based on these figures and on the general injury to the agriculture of the District gave as the amount per acre which Government would be justified in spending, in order to avert famine by means of irrigational protection, as Rs. 150 in Katangī and Rs. 100 over the District as a whole. The dreadful series of losses that have passed over the District may after all prove to have been a blessing in disguise, if they result in a return to the irrigation policy from which the Government allowed itself to be turned aside at the end of the sixties.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

Revenue system of the Marāthas.

195. As the present District of Bālāghāt contains portions of the old Districts of Seonī and Bhandāra, the early revenue history of the District follows two different lines. The system prevailing in Bhandāra prior to the inception of British management in 1820 is described by Sir Richard Jenkins. The revenue of the different Districts was generally realised by *māmlatdārs*. These individuals, who were usually appointed from among the court favourites, were practically farmers of the revenue; they contracted with Government to pay in a certain sum as revenue which was fixed when they were appointed, usually at a higher figure than that before prevailing: and the *māmlatdār* was often compelled to pay some proportion of it in advance. He appointed his own collecting agency. These were the *kamaishdārs*, or pargana executive officials. Separate *kamaishdārs* held charge of Hattā, Dhansuā and Lānji under the Lānji *māmlatdār*. Besides these, the *pharnavīs* kept account of the receipts and disbursements of his pargana, and the *barār pāndia* of the state of the cultivation. These two officials were supervised by the *sadar pharnavīs* and the *sadar barār pāndia* at Nagpur.

The village establishment directly responsible to Government consisted of the patel, the *pāndia* and the kotwār. The former collected revenue, allotted lands for cultivation and fixed rent, and also possessed some small executive and magisterial authority. Succession in the case of patels was usually, but by no means always, hereditary. Any patel who was unable to carry on the village or meet the constantly increasing demands was dispossessed. The *pāndia* kept the rent rolls (*lāgwans*) and was usually the village scribe. He was

paid by the patel and villagers. The kotwār was, as at present, a low caste village servant, exercising also certain police functions.

Method of assessment.

196. The method in which the revenue demand was distributed among the villages of each pargana by the *kamaishdār* and among the tenants of each village by the patel, is described by Sir Richard Jenkins in his account of the territories of the Rājā of Nāgpur; his description is quoted below:—'The cultiva-'tors hold their lands on a yearly lease, granted them by the 'patel. None of them are entitled to cultivate the same fields 'in perpetuity, nor is it the practice to grant leases to them 'for more than one year. No class has a right to hold their 'fields on more favourable terms than others, every field 'liable to assessment being subject to the payment of its full 'proportion of the whole *jamā*, which, as well as the 'proportionate share of each separate field or parcel, is open 'to many variations. The cultivated lands of each village 'are divided into fields, each distinguished by a name, under 'which it is recorded in the village registers of accounts, and 'it is upon those fields that the assessment is apportioned; 'but throughout this tract of country no traces of fixed 'assessments, or of assessment rates, either general or 'village, are to be found. The total *jamā* of villages con-'stantly fluctuates; and, in regard to rates, the revenue papers 'make no reference to them; and the people have no under-'standing that a portion of land, of given extent and quality, 'is to pay a certain rent, or that a given portion of the produce 'is the Government share. Even the engagements for bring-'ing waste lands into cultivation, where some remains of other 'principles, had such ever existed, were likely to be found, are not made with reference to rates, or to a partition of crops, 'but are settled by *nazarandās* or estimate, into which all the 'considerations affecting rent seem to enter. Neither in 'theory nor practice does Government admit the right of any 'class of cultivators to participate in the full amounts of the

'rents of the lands, and the object of its revenue system 'appears to have been, to realise from every portion of the 'lands under cultivation a proportionate share of the total 'village assessment. In what manner this was effected shall 'now be explained.

'Here, as in most other parts of India, annual settlements 'are concluded at the commencement of the agricultural year 'between the ryots on the one part, and the patel, acting as 'the Government agent, on the other; but here, at the time 'of concluding them, which is termed *istimalut*, the total 'village assessment is unknown, and the amount of it is not 'regulated by the community, consequently, it is impossi-'ble at this time to fix the rent to be paid by each portion of 'land.

Chāl and thok fields.

197. 'In the village papers, all the lands are classed 'under the two denominations of *chāl* 'and *thok*. The former term is applied 'to fields for which the patel can conclude engagements, by 'which the renters bind themselves to pay a stated proportion 'of the whole village assessment, whatever it may be. The 'latter term refers to fields which the patel cannot rent under 'the other stipulation, and is consequently obliged to let out 'at a fixed rent not subject to any alterations whatever. It 'must be understood, however, that the lands which in any 'one year are respectively *chāl* and *thok*, do not always 'remain so, but pass from under the one denomination to the 'other, in conformity with the changes in the engagements 'between the ryots and patel. The lands let under the *thok* 'engagement bear but a small proportion to the others, and 'as the *chāl* fields pay the highest rent, lands in the process 'of deterioration pass from the *chāl* to the *thok*, and when 'advancing in improvement, from the *thok* to the *chāl*. The 'relative proportions of *thok* and *chāl* fields vary in every 'village, depending on the general rate of the village assess-'ment, the existing demand for land and various other 'circumstances.

'It would appear then, that the only lands of which the 'rents can be fixed at the annual settlement, are those called '*thok*. In regard to the greatest and most valuable portion, 'all that can be done is to settle the proportional part of the 'whole assessment, which each contracting individual is 'ultimately to contribute; but, in order to effect this 'object, it is necessary to have the means of expressing, 'and recording the proportional value of each field or por'tion of *chāl* land. The lands never having been measured, 'this is done by the use of nominal equivalents to specific 'portions of land. In some villages these equivalents are 'rupees and annas; in others, *pānds*, divided into sixteen 'fractional parts, also called annas or kowries; every *chāl* 'field is rated in the village yearly accounts at so many 'rupees, or annas, or cowries, the amount of which is 'altered to express the changes that may arise in the pro'portional valuation of the fields.

'This expression of the proportional value is called 'the *ain* of a field; if in one year the respective *ains* of 'two fields should be three and four annas or cowries, 'these contribute in that ratio to the general assessment, 'and should it be necessary to alter the rates, it is 'effected by raising or lowering the *ain* of either of them. 'The man who has settled the *ain* of his fields at eight 'annas knows he will have to pay double of his neighbour's 'rent, whose fields are rated at four, and one half of what 'another must contribute whose lands are valued at one 'rupee.

The Lāgwans.

'198. Amongst other papers, there is one prepared in each village, called the *lāgwan*. It is the record in which are inserted the 'details of the engagements concluded at the commencement 'of each season between the patel and ryots. It shows the 'name of each ryot, the name of each *chāl* field held by him, 'and the *ain* of those fields, as settled in the preceding year, 'also the same particulars for the current year, noting all

'changes, whether arising from the transfer of fields from one 'individual to another, or from a variation in the *ain* of any 'of the fields. A similar statement, regarding the *thok* field, 'is also given, every alteration in the rent of them being 'specified, as likewise all transfers of *thok* to *chāl*, or of *chāl* 'fields to *thok;* and should any land be newly engaged for, or 'thrown out of cultivation, the change is recorded; when, in 'fine, the amount of the Government demand is known, the 'rate of assessment on each unit of the *ain*, and which is de-'nominated *dhāra*, is also inserted. In concluding the settle-'ment for any given year, the *lāgwan* of the preceding one is 'usually adopted as the basis on which the new engagements 'are framed, as well as the standard, with reference to which 'all changes are noted and understood. Did no circumstances 'connected with the state of the cultivation, or the means 'and inclinations of the cultivator, render changes necessary, 'the settlement would naturally be the same as that of the 'former year; any difference in the total village assessment 'having no direct influence on those previous engagements. 'In fact, however, it seldom or never happens that the settle-'ments of two years are made in conformity with each other. 'and as so many contending interests are at stake, they are 'seldom concluded without much discussion between the 'parties. In the end, however, every arrangement is, in 'general, amicably concluded, the details are entered in 'the *lagwan* of the year, and the settlement considered com-'plete. By a reference to the *lāgwan* so prepared, the Gov-'ernment assessor can see at one view every change from 'the assessment of the former year that has taken place, 'and can, with facility, estimate what amount the several 'portions of land will have to contribute to any given 'assessment. When that is fixed, from the amount of it 'the total rent of the *thok* field is deducted, and the 'remainder, being divided by the number of units in the 'whole *ain*, the *dhāra*, or rate of assessment of the *chāl* 'fields, is given.

'199 It appears, then that at the *istimālut*, the patel, with reference to the settlement of the previous year, makes agreements for 'the assessments of the current one: that those agreements 'stipulate for the payment of a fixed sum from a small por-'tion of the lands, and settle the apportionment of the re-'mainder of the assessments on the others. As the amount 'of the Government demand, and of defalcations that may 'subsequently occur, are unknown, more definite arrange-'ments cannot be effected. The arrangements concluded, 'the patel knows he has settled the mode in which the whole '*jamā*, whatever it may be, is to be collected, and the ryots 'are informed as to the proportion in which each is to 'contribute to it, and this is sufficient to induce them to 'commence their yearly labours. In fact, the *istimālut* is a 'preparatory *kulwār*, or *ryotwār* settlement, in which a new 'apportionment of the assessment is made, in order to meet 'the changes that may have arisen in the state of the lands 'and their cultivators. The object in view is, to apply the 'village assessment, so that the proportion of it assessed on 'each portion may be correctly adapted to the actual state 'of the lands and the ryots, and the attainment of it is left 'to the village community, in whose hands alone, perhaps, 'there is any chance of its being effected.

Assessment on patels.

'From what has been already said, it will appear that 'the amount of the village assessment is not regulated by 'any specific rules. The lands were first brought into cul-'tivation under a lease, commonly paying a *rasad jamā*, not 'settled with reference to any acknowledged standard, but 'merely as the parties could agree. On the expiration of 'this lease, the village becomes subject to its due proportion 'of the pargana assessment, and it is the object of the revenue 'officers to assimilate the rate of it to that of the other 'villages of the District; the amount paid in the last year 'probably being assumed as the assessment, with reference 'to which all subsequent changes are introduced.

The equity of the assessment.

200. 'Formerly, after the completion of the *istimālut*, 'the patels were assembled at the *kasbā*, 'where the *kumaishdār* with the assist- 'ance of the other revenue officers, 'settled the apportionment of the whole pargana assessment '(which might be more or less than that of the former year, 'as the Government determined), upon the different villages 'composing it, generally in conformity with the *tufik* or distri- 'bution of last year, as far as practicable, but introducing 'changes which might have become necessary from alterations 'in the relative capability of some of the villages. From an 'examination of the *lāgwans*, and from enquiries often made 'by persons despatched for the specific purpose, he could 'ascertain the relative amount of land subject to the assess- 'ment, and, if possessed of the knowledge he ought to have 'of his business, there is no doubt an experienced revenue 'officer may lay on the assessment with as correct an adapta- 'tion to the circumstances of the several villages as could 'probably be obtained by any other mode.

'The annual demand of the Government on a village was 'founded on, but not regulated by, the previous year's assess- 'ment, and the whole system may be briefly stated thus:—

'Every portion of cultivated land, but no other, is liable 'to assessment, the Government demand is on the village 'lands in general, and not on the particular portions of it; 'consequently, the apportionment of the assessment falls 'where the responsibility does, namely, on the patel and 'village community, and there are no fixed rates to prevent 'the apportionment going hand in hand with changes in the 'lands, or in the circumstances of the cultivators; and as the 'proportionate share of the whole assessment demandable 'from each village was not originally fixed, nor subsequently 'modified, according to any determinate rules, but merely to 'the relative capability of the village as indicated by 'former experience, so the pargana assessment was, in like 'manner, grounded on previous settlemnts; but affected, no

'doubt, in a great degree, by the character and circumstances
'of the existing Government.

'It may be stated generally, that the rent of each
'portion of *chāl* land is constantly subject to alterations, in
'consequence not only of fluctuations in the amount of the
'Government demand, but likewise from changes in the rent
'of other portions of land, arising out of each new *istimālut*
'apportionment of the assessment, as also from defalcations
'in the collection of it.

'It may also be remarked, that uniformity in the amount
'of the village assessment is not only unaccompanied with
'uniformity in the rents of the portions into which the land is
'divided, but is absolutely incompatible with it, unless it
'were possible to remove the causes that render changes in
'the yearly appointment of the assessment necessary, as like-
'wise to ensure the realisation of the assessment, in strict
'agreement with such apportionment.'

Policy under British protectorate

201. Sir R. Jenkins' policy on taking over the administration of the country was to remit a number of extra imposts that had gradually grown up round the revenue demand, and to leave only the well recognised additional dues, though even these were sufficiently numerous ; to remit irrecoverable balances and to grant leases on favourable terms for breaking up waste land. A more doubtful point was, whether the patels were to adhere to rates fixed by the Superintendents of Districts in letting out lands, or whether they were to be allowed a free hand. The history of the case would seem to be, that Sir R. Jenkins at first allowed the Superintendents of Districts to fix the rent rates, but he eventually decided to allow the patels to let out land as they liked without restriction. This concession, however, does not seem to have become generally known and the patels considered themselves bound to let out land at the old rates: the results being that rents remained stagnant until raised at the 30 years' settlement. A curious account is given in para.

142 of Mr. Lawrence's Bhandāra Settlement Report of the system introduced by Captain Wilkinson, Superintendent of the Waingangā District, who appointed *tankīhdārs* from among local cultivators to watch and report on the fluctuations of the village rent-rolls. This procedure, which was intended to secure the correctness of the *lāgwans* on which the assessment was based, seems to have resulted in many abuses, and in the great enrichment of the *tankīhdārs* at the expense of the patels. During the years 1820, 1821, 1822, the revenue demand increased: from 1822 to 1830 no great enhancement was imposed.

Policy under subsequent native rule.

202. After the cessation of the British protectorate in the year 1830, the same system was maintained, but, owing to the greater corruption and lessening supervision of the subordinate staff, with the result of a decrease in the revenue demand, for which, however, the great fall in prices was to some extent responsible. After the lapse of the Nāgpur kingdom in 1854, summary settlements were made on the existing rent-roll, with the result of a still further diminution of the demand.

Operations of 30 years' settlement.

203. This was the state of affairs at the inception of the operations of the 30 years' settlement. The first step taken by the Settlement Officer was to demarcate the villages and decide all questions of title: after which the village areas were surveyed, and mapped, the soil was classed, and the *khasrā* written up. Areas to which no one could prove a title of possession were declared waste, and ultimately, if not included in a zamīndāri estate, became Government forest. A certain sum was assumed as the rent which an acre of cultivated soil of each class should be able to pay; this varied according to the part of the District it happened to fall in; the District was divided into *chaks* and the same class of soil in the various *chaks*, bore different rates according to the advantages or disadvantages of the *chak*. This rent-rate

was compared with the *lāgwans*, which were also carefully checked and revised: and the totals of the *lāgwans* were used as a means of checking the suitability of the theoretical rents. The home farm was also valued and its rental value added to the total of the *lāgwans*. The *siwai* income of the patels from forest and other sources was estimated; and on the total assets so ascertained, *viz.*, the theoretical rent-rates for all cultivated lands, plus the *siwai*, revenue was imposed. Besides this, an average revenue-rate per plough was also calculated by counting the ploughs in each village, and a produce-rate by estimating the value of the produce of each village. A comparison of the various plough rates and revenue-rates, obtained by dividing the revenue as fixed by the number of ploughs or amount of produce, was considered to show the comparative incidence of the revenue on the cultivating resources or produce of different villages. The average revenue-rate over the portion of the District ultimately transferred to Bālaghāt fell at 6½ annas per acre of cultivation. The zamindāris were also assessed in the same way as the *khālsa* villages, except that after fixing the *kāmil jamā* or theoretical revenue at mālguzāri rates, a quit-rent was fixed at a lower sum than the *kāmil jamā*; and a triennial assessment was imposed on the *fāzil* or excess jungle, which in the *khalsā* was recorded as Government waste. The rights of all cultivators were at the same time enquired into and determined.

System in force in the Seoni District.

204. The Baihar tahsil, which with the Karolā and Katangī tracts formed part of the Saugor-Nerbudda territories, seems to have been held on tālukdāri tenure up till 1861. The country was divided up into large tracts such as Mau, Paraswāra, or Bhimlāt, which were held on quit-rent by various persons from time to time, usually on a five years' lease. Two settlements of the tract were made for five years each; the second being cancelled after its second year. then a 20 years' settlement.

which also failed: and from 1848 till the end of the period a fresh settlement was introduced. The revenue in spite of fluctuations steadily declined till the introduction of the summary settlement in 1861 when an enhancement from Rs. 2,660 to Rs. 4,310 was imposed. The earlier years of revenue administration seem to have been a series of mistaken attempts to impose a revenue as near as possible to the nominal sum which the Marāthā assessment stood at.

Early settlements in the Seonī District.

205. The portion of the District belonging to Seonī proper seems to have suffered, as did the rest of that District, from the depredations of the Pindāris and the exactions of the Marāthas from 1812 to 1818, which reduced the revenue demand of Seonī from Rs. 3,25,000 to Rs. 1,46,198. The first British administrator of that District, Major O'Brien, states that at one time the revenue demand was based on measurements which had ceased to exist. In his own time payments were fixed on thekā which was a sort of 'upset' demand for a village, but land was also assessed by the *biswā* of 200 *hāths* square and by the plough. Two annual settlements were made up to 1821, and after this there were two five year settlements, a ten years' settlement and a 20 years' settlement. A substantial reduction in revenue occurred after the 10 years' settlement, in fact, the early settlements seem to have been ill-adjusted and excessive, as there were almost always three or four changes of demand during each settlement in most villages, owing to the patel being unable to meet the assessment and absconding. Mr. Martin Bird, who was deputed by the Government of the North-Western Provinces to enquire into the revenue administration of the Saugor and Nerbudda territories, stated in his often quoted report that 'In the vain hope of 'propping up an exorbitant assessment, a system of mischiev- 'ous interference in the private affairs and concerns of indivi- 'duals everywhere prevailed'; and on his recommendation the 20 years' settlement was entered into. Even this settlement

which was on a *jamā* increasing at intervals of 5 years, was found too heavy, and nothing was taken in excess of the original *jamā* for the second period of five years.

Comparison of 30 years' settlement in Bhandāra and Seoni.

206. There is no doubt that the assessment of the portion of the District taken from Bhandāra was lighter than that of the portion taken from Seonī: the incidence of revenue per acre in the first case being R. 0-7-4 and in the second R. 0-10-7 per acre of cultivated area.

The total *kāmil jamā* of the District, as fixed at the 1867 settlement of Bhandāra and Seoni, was Rs. 1,63,780 or at 62 per cent on assets of Rs. 2,70,987.

Settlement of 1895.

207. During the currency of the 30 years' settlement there was a large spontaneous expansion in the agricultural resources of the District. In the mālguzāri area the area under rice increased from 247,100 acres to 290,235 in 1894-95. The cropped area went up from 334,123 acres to 410,450 acres. The payments of tenants rose from Rs. 1,82,661 to Rs. 2,88,103 with a rise in the rent-rate from R. 0-11-4 to R. 0-13-4 an acre, in spite of the extension of cultivation to poorer soils. It remained for the Settlement Officer to level up inequalities of rental incidence due to the varying rights of tenants or varying local conditions: to re-value the landlords' home farms and their *siwai* receipts in accordance with the increased demand for land and the increased value of forest produce, and to assess a suitable Government demand on the total income so arrived at.

The 30 years' settlement came to an end during the years 1896 to 1898. Enquiries conducted by Mr. Mayne in the Bālāghāt tahsil showed that the price of rice, the staple product, had risen by 80 per cent. since settlement. In the same tahsil, the gross cropped area had increased by 45 per cent., while the population in the richest parts of the District exceeded 550 to the cultivated square mile. The

opening of the Bengāl-Nāgpur Railway to Tumsar in 1879-80 and later to Gondia had largely contributed to the rise in prices; and two good roads linked the railway with the Katangī and Bālāghāt markets.

Revenue survey.

208. Before attempting any assessment, however, it had been judged necessary to resurvey the District. The previous survey conducted at the 30 years' settlement was not based on a traverse, so that, while the internal survey of individual villages attained a tolerable degree of accuracy, the area obtained by totalling the areas of the different villages was far from correct. After the District had been traversed, each village was surveyed in detail, field by field. This survey, which was based on the skeleton traverse maps furnished by the Imperial Traverse party, occupied the years 1889-90 to 1893-94. The area dealt with included 2,264 square miles, of which 1,878 square miles are mālguzāri and zamīndāri, and the balance consisted of ryotwāri villages or areas which were expected to be colonised by Government ryots. In the zamīndāris, certain areas had been separated at the 30 years' settlement and demarcated as *fāzil* mahāls. The boundaries of these were indistinguishable and the maps not forthcoming when the time came for them to be traversed: so that the boundary taken by the traverse party was more or less arbitrary: but as the areas in question were said to be under the same owners, this fact was considered unimportant. Various other areas in Baihar have been traversed from time to time, since the close of the general District traverse. The cost of the traverse was Rs. 22 and of the cadastral survey Rs. 33-2-2 per square mile.

On completion of the survey, the record of rights was taken in hand. The *khasrā* and *jamābandī* of the 30 years' settlement was taken as a basis and the tenure of each cultivator was traced back to this document.

Attestation.

209. The attestation of the District was taken up by Mr. Mayne in 1895 and the maps and record prepared at survey were again

checked in detail. The usual system of soil classing was adopted; the particularly careful methods of rice cultivation in vogue in the District necessitating a rather elaborate scale of soil factors; no less than 228 possible variations of soil and position being allowed for.

Owing to the various delays caused by famine, and to the widely differing circumstances of the different portions of the District, the same system was not adopted everywhere. Detailed soil classing was not attempted for the mālguzāri portions of the Baihar tahsīl and for the above-ghāt area of the Bālāghāt tahsīl. The financial results of the operations were as follows:—

Mālguzāri assessment.

210 The payments of *mālik-makbūzas* in Bālāghāt tahsīl were raised from R. 0-10-7 to R. 0-15-7 an acre or by 47 per cent. In Baihar the enhancement was from R. 0-2-0 to R. 0-3-0 an acre only.

The rents of absolute occupancy tenants were raised from R. 0-14-9 to R. 1-2-6 an acre in Bālāghāt or by 25 per cent: in Baihar they remained unchanged at R. 0-5-0 an acre. Occupancy rents were raised from R. 0-14-0 to R. 1-1-1 an acre in Bālāghāt: and in Baihar from R. 0-6-7 to R. 0-6-9 only. The rents of ordinary tenants were raised in Bālāghāt from R. 0-15-6 to R. 1-0-9 an acre, or by 8 per cent: and subsequently to settlement they rose spontaneously to R. 1-2-3 an acre.

The all-round rate for the District for all classes of tenants was increased from R. 0-13-7 to R. 0-15-6 an acre or by 14 per cent.

The home farm in Bālāghāt was valued at R. 1-3-9 an acre, and in Baihar at R. 0-8-5 an acre, but the quality of the home farm in both tahsīls is so greatly superior to that of the ryotī land, that the real incidence of the home farm valuation is certainly not greater than that of the rental payments of ordinary tenants. The low rates in Baihar are due partly to its recent colonisation, and partly to the fact that no

rental enhancement was attempted; the only cases where payments were raised being due to the assessment of rent on encroachments.

At the 30 years' settlement, a sum of Rs. 12,258 was assumed as *siwai* income, *i.e.*, the income derived by landlords otherwise than from rents or cultivation. This was raised to Rs. 29,968, although the sum actually found to be received was Rs. 40,186. The *siwai* assessment is a very moderate one. The Bhādra zamīndāri was assumed to have an income of Rs. 1,500 from lac, gum, honey, etc., whereas the zamīndār has for some years past regularly leased his lac at upwards of Rs. 30,000 a year. The total income of the mālguzārs and zamīndārs of the District, including the rental value of the home farm, was—

| | Rs. |
|---|---|
| Mālik-makbūzas ... ... | 9,361 |
| Tenants' rental ... ... | 3,10,112 |
| Rental value of home farm, etc. ... | 1,20,044 |
| Siwai income ... ... | 29,968 |
| Total ... | 4,69,485 |

The corresponding figures for the 30 years' settlement were—

| | Rs. |
|---|---|
| Malik-makbūzas .. ... | 7,402 |
| Tenants' rental ... ... | 1,82,661 |
| Home farm, etc. ... ... | 68,667 |
| Siwai income ... ... | 12,258 |
| Total .. | 2,70,988 |

The total increase was Rs. 1,98,497; of this, Rs. 21,313 represented rent enhancement at settlement. The rents as finally ascertained and announced were Rs. 3,09,415, though Rs. 3,29,469 had been assessed on the land occupied by tenants before the famine. This decline was due to the abandonment

of land between attestation and announcement, owing to the bad years. It remained now to fix the Government revenue on these assets.

Zamīndāris.

211. The Bālāghāt District, however, contains a number of zamīndāris which do not pay full revenue, but a reduced assessment called *takolī*. Both in non-zamīndāri (or *khālsa*) and in zamīndāri villages, the revenue is fixed on the same lines: in the case of the former, this is the revenue actually to be paid: in the latter it is the theoretical revenue that would have been paid, but for the zamīndāri status of the proprietor. This status does not adhere to the estate; so that in the case of the owner's losing it by sale or transfer, the new proprietor obtains only mālguzāri rights and has to pay full revenue. The cesses of zamīndāri villages are fixed on the theoretical revenue, or *kāmil jamā*, as it is called. The *kāmil jamā* of *khālsa* villages in the Baihar and Bālāghāt tahsīls at the 30 years' settlement was Rs. 1,24,809, which fell at 62 per cent. of the assets; this, owing chiefly to the conferral of fresh proprietary rights in Baihar subsequent to settlement, had risen to Rs 1,26.444 before revision.

Mālguzāri revenue.

212. As the result of settlement operations, a revenue of Rs. 1,90,172 was sanctioned in *khālsa* villages at 55 per cent. of assets. This is an instance of the tendency, which characterises most recent settlements in the Central Provinces to a gradual reduction of the share of the State in the village income from the high percentage taken in Marāthā times. Owing, however, to the losses caused by famines, the *kāmil jamā* actually announced came only to Rs. 1,87,084. Of this sum, Rs. 830 were not actually recoverable, as there are 5 villages exempt from revenue for ever under the Waste Land Sale Rules, and one village held on reduced revenue as a religious grant. For such villages, however, as for zamīndāri estates, a theoretical full revenue or *kāmil jamā* is fixed in all cases.

Takoli of zamīndāris.

213. In the zamīndāris, the assets had stood at Rs. 67,533 at the 30 years' settlement. On these a *kāmil jamā* of Rs. 40,496 was assessed at 60 per cent. On this again a *takolī* of Rs. 29,998 was fixed; the part of this, however, which was levied on *fāzil* jungle and excise, was liable to reassessment at fixed intervals.

Before revision, the zamīndārs' income had risen to Rs. 93,589 and the *takolī* assessed thereon to Rs. 34,780. After reassessment, deducting the portions of the zamīndāris which had been alienated and had therefore gone to form part of the mālguzāri portion of the District, the gross assets stood at Rs. 1,07,442 on which a *kamīl jamā* of Rs. 58,305 at 55 per cent. was assessed. *Takolī* was fixed on this at Rs. 40,785, or at the rate of 70 per cent., and the net cesses on the *kāmil jamā* amounted to Rs. 4,254. The balance left to the zamīndars before revision amounted to Rs. 56,268, and after revision to Rs 41,152. In fixing zamīndāri *takolīs*, the effect on the zamīndārs' income was the principal consideration before the mind of Government, and the absence of opposition to the new settlement on the part of the zamīndārs is a proof that due weight was paid to it

The net revenue demand for the *khālsa* and zamındāri villages was thus raised from Rs. 1,61,224 to Rs. 2,42,279 or by Rs. 81,055. The cost of the settlement of these areas amounted to Rs. 1,28,717, or Rs. 68-12-0 per square mile. The occurrence of famine during the operations added considerably to the expense. The total expenditure on survey and settlement including that of the ryotwāri villages, came to Rs. 2,03,754 or Rs. 90-2-6 per square mile.

Miscellaneous settlement operations.

214. Progressive assessments were adopted in 115 villages, involving the surrender of Rs. 20,560 of revenue, spread over periods of from 2 to 8 years in different cases.

In 142 villages or mahāls dual proprietary rights existed. Here, besides the state revenue, *mālikāna* or proprietary

dues payable by the inferior to the superior proprietors had to be assessed. At the last settlement, owing to the greater elasticity of the inferior proprietors' income and the expected rapidity of its increase, high percentages of revenue were taken as *mālikāna* The continuance of these at a time when the incomes of the inferior proprietors could no longer be expected to show any very great spontaneous expansion, would have been ruinous to them: and a standard percentage of 30 per cent. was fixed. Where this caused loss to the zamīndārs, it was made up for by a reduction of *takolī*. Even so, however, in dual proprietary villages the total payments of revenue, *mālikāna* and cesses are about 70 per cent. of assets. The existence of dual proprietary rights, in all save the very best villages, seriously weakens their power to resist bad seasons The following cesses were imposed with the revised assessments:—

| | | Rs. |
|---|---|---|
| Road, school and post at 5½ per cent | ... | 14,243 |
| Additional rate at 2 per cent ... | ... | 5,202 |
| Patwāri cess at 5 per cent ... | ... | 12,503 |
| Total at 12½ per cent | ... | 31,948 |

The additional rate was abolished in 1905. The proportion of revenue and cesses to the gross produce was estimated by the Settlement Officer at 6 per cent.

It was also the duty of the Settlement Officer to readjust the circles of kotwārs and revise their remuneration. Prior to settlement there were 977 kotwars, whose remuneration was valued at Rs. 26,434 or an average of Rs. 27 a head. This was made up of the estimated value of hides, grain dues and the annual value of service lands The grain dues were, save in ryotwāri villages, converted into cash, which, with the estimated annual value of the kotwār's other perquisites, gave them an income after settlement of Rs. 31,907, while their numbers were reduced to 843 by the abolition or amalgamation of circles

The Wājib-ul-arz.

215. One of the most important parts of settlement work was the drawing up of the *wājib-ul-arz* or village administration paper. A different one is in force in the *khālsa* and in the zamīndāris. A very useful clause records and confirms the irrigation rights hitherto enjoyed by the cultivators of the various fields, so that, if necessary, they may be enforced by law. A record is also maintained in this document of the dues of the village servants and of the leases on which land is held rent free as against the mālguzār. Bazar dues and *begār* or unpaid labour are forbidden in the *khālsa*, but allowed in the zamīndaris, though care has been taken to prevent the latter from being oppressively exacted. One or two somewhat important matters find no place in the *wājib-ul-arz*; in particular the right to lac on trees growing in tenants' land is left undetermined, nor is there any record of rights of way, passage of waste-water, etc. All these matters form the subject of frequent disputes. Moreover, the *wājib-ul-arz* binds no member of the village community save the proprietors.

Currency of settlement.

216. The currency of the mālguzari settlement is for 16 years, or from 1898 to 1914 in the lowland villages and from 1899 to 1914 in the hill villages of the Bālāghāt tahsīl. A short-term settlement of 7 years (1900—1907) has been sanctioned for the Baihar tahsīl, to give the people time to recover from the effects of famine before any rent enhancement is undertaken.

Abatement.

217. In consequence of the series of bad years, culminating in the famine of 1899-1900, the area under crop in many parts of the District had been seriously reduced; and though the agricultural statistics for the years 1900-01 and 1901-02 showed steady recovery, the area under rice was still 20 per cent. less than the normal. With this average decrease over the District as a whole, there was still more serious deterioration in individual villages, especially in North Karola and Katangī.

It was consequently decided to reduce rents and revenue for three years in all villages in which the cropped area fell short by more than 15 per cent of normal. After striking off abandoned holdings, rents and revenue were reduced in proportion to the reduction in the net cropped area. Operations were confined to the Bālāghāt tahsīl, as the settlement in the Baihar tahsīl had been made on summary lines. The result of the operations was to reduce the demand from tenants and *mālik-makbūzas* by Rs. 10,411, and the revenue demand by Rs. 9,987 in 135 villages; and, owing to the unfavourable character of the year 1902-03, the concession was ordered to have effect up to the 30th June 1906.

The above description applies to the mālguzāri portions of the Baihar tahsīl and to the Bālāghāt tahsīl. The settlement of the ryotwāri portion of the District was undertaken separately from the mālguzāri settlement.

History of Ryotwāri tract.

218. The history of the tract prior to the ryotwāri settlement of the villages is an important and interesting record of the various methods which Government has adopted to ensure the colonisation of this upland area, which was, as already stated, the main object for which the District was constituted. At the close of the 30 years' settlement operations, the entire plateau of Baihar, including Bhimlat and Raigarh, was, with the exception of 8 villages, declared to be Government waste. Other large tracts in the Paraswāra plateau, the Mau pargana and the uplands of Dhansuā were also reserved by Government as waste. Subsequent to settlement, proprietary rights were granted in 10 other villages in the above tracts

In 1870, 55 villages were carved out of these waste lands and given on lease for 10 years, with a promise of renewal if 50 per cent of the total area was brought under cultivation by the time the next settlement was made with them. Another batch of 71 villages was given out in 1872 on similar terms, save that patelī rights were promised

instead of mālguzāri rights. Other batches of villages were leased out in 1876, 1877, and in 1884, but these merely gave preferential claims to renewal, provided the holders brought 60 per cent. of the area under permanent cultivation within a limited time. Most of these leases were given out under the orders of Colonel Bloomfield, the veritable founder of the Baihar tahsīl. An account of the early colonisation work of Baihar will be found in a previous Chapter.

Confusion regarding rights earned by early settlers.

219. The gradually lessening liberality of the terms offered by Government, and the adoption of a ryotwāri policy caused a great falling off in the rapidity of development, and it is only of recent years that Government has made any continuous efforts to carry to completion the work of these early pioneers. There were, however, difficulties regarding the leased villages. They were given out without any proper survey: the boundary marks, if ever laid down, became obliterated by lapse of time; and the area granted by lease rarely corresponded with the area over which the *thekedār* claimed possession; so that it was practically impossible in many cases to discover if the rights promised by Government had or had not been earned. Ultimately only 5 men obtained mālguzāri rights and 6 men patelī rights (a sort of perpetual lease, or mālguzāri right without powers of transfer).

Mr. Venning, Commissioner of the Nāgpur Division, visited Baihar in 1886. His main objection to the *thekedāri* system was that it tended to the unnecessary destruction of forest area by aborigines, who sowed kodon in the area for a year or two and then moved on to another patch of fresh jungle. This evil, it may be noted, is by no means lessened under the ryotwāri system: nor will it greatly diminish until the pressure of cultivation causes these areas of somewhat high-lying and inferior soil to be embanked for rice and irrigated by the construction of tanks. At present the inferiority of the soil and the absence of protective irrigation renders it unlikely that any cultivator will expend money on

the construction of rice embankments on such land, so long as there is richer and lower lying land available.

Final settlement of their claims.

220. In 1887 under the orders of Sir D. Fitzpatrick, a cadastral survey of these villages was undertaken, but as it was unaccompanied by a traverse, there were grave errors in the areas, and it formed an insufficient basis for orders. Proposals for settlement of the various leased villages were sent up, a few at a time, as survey was completed, and the result was generally unsatisfactory. Cases were not always accurately represented. orders were not always consistent: and when passed were not always carried out; and much discontent existed in consequence. The whole case was taken up by Mr. Scott in 1898, and the question finally and comprehensively dealt with.

Beginning of ryotwari management.

221. Meantime, the ryotwāri areas had been cadastrally surveyed from 1891 onwards on the basis of a traverse survey: they had been cut up into survey numbers of suitable areas, which were duly demarcated by posts and heaps of stones; these numbers were soil-classed and assessed to revenue. Besides the survey numbers soil-classed and assessed for cultivation, there were other areas reserved for grazing, forest user, roads, and village sites. The idea was at first to allow the Forest Department to manage these forest areas in ryotwari villages, but it was eventually found that forest subordinates exercised a very oppressive control in the levying of excess grazing or forest dues, and their undue interference in ryotwāri management tended to retard progress. Eventually their jurisdiction was to some extent ousted. but ryots are still liable to pay dues for more than a certain number of cattle per plough grazing in their village areas; certain minor forest produce and reserved species of trees are still the property of the Forest Department, and forest officials are still able to check the ryots' cattle and call them to account in respect of their disposal of the produce of ryotwāri forests. This

is an undesirable state of things; but the great and increasing value of the *harrā* crop makes it difficult for Government to hand over the control of ryotwāri forest produce to a number of individuals: if the Forest Department had no authority over ryotwari forest produce, that of the adjoining Government forests would never be able to fetch its real value on account of the poaching that would result, and the loss to Government would probably be not less than Rs. 10,000 a year. It seems, however, an anomalous state of things that the grazing dues paid by Government ryots should equal or exceed the land revenue, and it is clear that the rents, which average some 3½ annas an acre, are much too low.

Recent ryotwāri developments.

222. The attention of Government was again particularly directed to the extension of ryotwāri colonisation in Baihar on the visit of the Hon. Mr. J. P. Hewett, Chief Commissioner, in 1903. An extensive programme of tank works to protect ryotwāri villages was taken up and is still in progress. A sum of Rs. 10,000 per annum was advanced for financial aid to intending colonists, and for improving the water-supply of existing villages and the construction of small tanks. A special Naib-Tahsildār was appointed to the tract, for the supervision of ryotwāri work. The village forests were ordered to be withdrawn from the management of the Forest Department and a set of rules was drawn up for their management under the Deputy Commissioner; and the maps of the tract, which, owing to the inadequacy of the local Land Record staff, had been allowed to get out of date, and were in other respects erroneous or defective, were corrected by a specially deputed party. The opportunity was taken at the same time to reconcile numerous discrepancies between forest and ryotwāri village boundaries, which had been brought to light at the forest survey in 1893-94 and subsequent years. There were, in the year 1906, 235 ryotwāri villages, containing an area of 214,484

acres; their culturable area amounted to 176,786 acres of which 98,531 acres were in occupation.

## CHAPTER IX.

## GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

District subdivisions.

223. The District is divided into two tahsils, Baihar and Bālāghāt. The former lies mostly on the upper plateau and upper valley of the Waingangā. In 1904 the boundary between the two tahsīls was altered; and the Nahāra and Uskal rivers were made the boundary line as far as Sonewāni, after which the boundary follows the ghāt line. The old parganas are now no longer referred to, except in ordinary speech as convenient designations for certain tracts. The Bālāghāt tahsil contained the Karolā and Katangī parganas on the west of the Waingangā; on its east the Dhansuā, Lānji, Hattā, Bhādra and Kinnāpur parganas. In Baihar the parganas were Mau, Paraswāra, Sarekhā, Bhīmlāt and Raigarh. The District forms part of the Nāgpur Division, for administrative purposes it is under the Nāgpur Commissioner; for judicial work under the Nāgpur Sessions and Divisional Judge. The District is administered by a Deputy Commissioner, who is also District Magistrate and District Registrar There is also a District Judge and a Subordinate Judge. There are two executive assistants; but it is the exception for an Assistant Commissioner to be posted to Bālāghāt. There is a Munsiff at Bālāghāt: and a Tahsīldār and Naib-Tahsīldār who have 2nd and 3rd class criminal powers respectively, and are also additional Judges to the Munsiff for civil work. At Baihar there is no Munsiff, but the Tahsīldār and Naib-Tahsīldār, who have the usual powers, dispose of the civil work. There is also a special Naib-Tahsīldār in charge of ryotwāri work, which here is important. There are no Honorary Magistrates in the District.[1] There is a Civil Surgeon who is not, as a rule, an officer of the I.M.S.; but

[1]Note.—Honorary Magistrates were appointed in 1907.

the Forest Division is important and is under a Deputy Conservator of the Imperial Service; there is frequently also an Assistant Conservator under training and one or more Extra Assistant Conservators attached to the Division. The District is in the Bhandāra Division of the Roads and Buildings Branch of the Public Works Department: and there is a Sub-Divisional Officer at Bālāghāt and, as a rule, at Baihar. The District irrigation is supervised by the Executive Engineer, Waingangā Division, stationed at Kamptee, with Sub-Divisional Officers at Bālāghat, Agri and Baihar.

Land Record Staff.

224. The Land Record Staff consists at present of a Superintendent, an Assistant Superintendent, 8 Revenue Inspectors, and 124 patwāris The average number of patwāris to a Revenue Inspector is 15; the average occupied and total areas of a patwāri's circle are respectively 4,136 acres and 11,415 acres, and the average number of villages, nine. The Revenue Inspectors' circles in the Bālāghāt tahsīl are Waraseoni, Lalbarrā, Kirnapur and Lānji; and in Baihar, Paraswāra, Baihar, Mohgaon and Bitli.

Before the recent settlement, in the parganas transferred from Seoni, patwāri cess was levied at 3 per cent. of assets; while the rate in the part of the District that had formed part of Bhandāra was 6 per cent. on the gross land revenue. Cultivators in ryotwāri villages paid one anna in the rupee of revenue. The patwāris to the east of the Waingangā were paid partly in cash from the treasury, partly by grain dues, recovered at the rate of one *kuro* of rice from tenants paying from Rs. 2 to Rs 5, and from tenants paying over Rs 5 at 2 *kuros* The patwāris of the area that had belonged to Seoni were paid from the treasury. In all, the dues in cash and kind amounted to Rs. 18,308 a year, but of this only Rs. 11,370 was paid into the treasury, and as the outgoings were Rs. 15,642, the fund showed an annual deficit of Rs. 4,272.

At settlement the staff was augmented by 20 patwāris and 2 Revenue Inspectors and the emoluments of patwaris

reduced to an average of Rs. 130 per annum: but personal allowances have been granted to individuals to save them from loss. Patwāri cess was fixed at 5 per cent. on the gross revenue. Patwāris also recover cash dues from cultivators at 6 pies per rupee. Where the total sum so recoverable exceeds the sum fixed as the patwāri's remuneration, the excess is recovered by the *lambardār* and paid into the treasury

The Land Record Staff was strengthened in 1904 by the addition of two Revenue Inspectors in Baihar. Two patwāri circles have been reduced by the afforestation of certain villages and the transfer of others to Mandlā. The financial aspects of the patwāri fund as exhibited by the accounts for 1904-05 were:—

| *Receipts.* | | Rs. | *Charges.* | Rs. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Patwāri cess. | From mālguzāri villages | 9,301 | Salaries of patwāris | 8,905 |
| | From zamīndāri ,, | 3,496 | Do. of controlling staff | 5,313 |
| | From ryotwāri ,, | 1,171 | Travelling allowance | 360 |
| | Miscellaneous | 441 | Forms and instruments | 936 |
| | | | Chainmen and *madadgars* | 694 |
| | | | Rewards ... | 200 |
| | | | Miscellaneous .. | 1,245 |
| | Total .. | 14,409 | Total ... | 17,653 |

The balance was made up from the receipts of other Districts.

225 The system of the patwāris collecting their own dues works well, as the cultivators are punctual payers, and have also a direct interest in the performance by the patwāri of his duties. The patwāris are of all castes, and of average efficiency, save in Baihar, where a patwāri's work is hardest and most important and the patwāri staff is still unfortunately very

Patwāris.

inferior. A not unimportant part of the patwāri's duties is to assist in teaching the children at the village schools to read and understand the village papers and map; and their instruction is gradually having its effect in an increased knowledge by the people of the village records. Generally speaking the patwāri fills not amiss the part of the poor man's lawyer, and, as a rule, he is inclined to take the part of the tenants rather than of the landlord. On the other hand he is often liable to the charge of inciting quarrels and false complaints; and, in Baihar, of oppressing the tenants, taking money for allotting ryots' holdings and engaging in cultivation and in grain-trading But on the whole he is a fairly respectable and hard-worked individual of whom much is required apart from his ordinary work, from managing children's relief kitchens in a famine, to mapping the scene of a theft or a murder for the police.

Judicial work.

226. There are the following courts in the District for the disposal of civil business only, *viz.*, those of the District Judge, the Subordinate Judge, and the Munsiff, Bālāghāt.

The following courts also include the disposal of certain classes of civil suits in their functions, the Tahsīldār, Bālāghāt, the Naib-Tahsīldār, Bālāghāt, the Tahsīldār, Baihar, and the Naib-Tahsīldār, Baihar.

The principal classes of suits brought before the courts of the District and Subordinate Judge are on mortgage deeds, while the Munsiff's court is mostly engaged with suits on bonds. Many cases also arise from disputes about irrigation, and a fertile source of litigation of recent years is the possession of *palās* jungles on which lac is grown.

In 1891 the number of suits instituted was 2,618 and their average value Rs. 67. In 1894 the average number had risen to 2,815 and their average value to Rs 77. There was a considerable fall owing to the bad years, and the number declined in 1900 to 1,051, with an average value of Rs 155 It rose again in 1901, but has fallen since then

owing to the success of the conciliation work. The total number of suits for 1905 stood at 1,543. Suits between landlord and tenant were 289 in number in 1891, and have never greatly exceeded that amount save in the two years after the 1897 famine, when they rose to 586 and 548 respectively. This represents the landlords' attempts to get in the arrears of rents due to the previous bad years. The more liberal revenue policy of Government and the more careful administration of recent years, have prevented the recurrence of this state of things by remission of rent and revenue where it was necessary.

Municipality.

227. There is now only one municipality in the District, that of Bālāghāt, or, as it was originally called, Būrha. The municipality was constituted in the year 1877. It includes parts of two villages, Būrha and Būrhi, an area of 829 acres in all, and its population in 1901 was 6,223. The total number of members of the committee is 10, of whom 7 are elected. There is no octroi in Bālāghāt, practically all the taxation being direct The funds are mainly derived from a tax on occupiers and owners, from bazar dues, and from a Government grant. The opening balance for the year ending the 31st March 1904 was Rs. 893, the receipts from the tax on houses and lands were Rs. 1,720, from conservancy cess Rs. 824, and from Government contributions Rs 2,100. The total income, excluding opening balance was Rs. 7,092, the incidence of taxation per head being R. 0-7-7. The expenditure on roads and conservancy was Rs. 3,702 and on education Rs. 2,080. The total expenditure was Rs. 7,985, and the closing balance Rs. 217. The abolition of the municipality has been considered, but its continuation was decided on, as it is well managed, though small, and a self-governing body is needed at the local headquarters. Municipalities were once in existence at Lālbarrā, Katangī and Warāseonī. These were founded in 1877. Katangī was abolished in 1894 and Lālbarrā and Warāseonī in 1901, on account of their being too small and

ill-managed, and Katangī has since been placed under the Village Sanitation Act. The bazars at Lālbarrā and Wārāseonī are managed by the District Council, and it is proposed to constitute the latter a 'Notified Area' under the recent Municipal Act.

District Council.

228. The whole District is under the management of the District Council. The Bālāghāt tahsīl, was, till recently, divided into the Eastern and Western Local Board areas, on the left and right banks of the Waingangā respectively. The Baihar tahsīl is under the Baihar Local Board. The Eastern and Western Bālāghāt Local Boards have since 1905 been amalgamated. The Balāghāt Local Board has 12 elected members and a total membership of 16. It controls an area of 1,075 square miles and a population of 226,617. It held 8 meetings in the year 1905-06 at which the average attendance of members was 8. The Baihar Local Board consists of 10 members, controls a local area of 1,645 square miles and a population of 88,020; it held 12 meetings in the year, at which the average attendance was 4.

The Bālāghat District Council consists of 16 members, of whom 2 are nominated and 2 *ex officio* members. It held 9 meetings in the year, at which the average attendance was 4 members. Its total income during the year, excluding the opening balance, was Rs. 44,188. Of this Rs 13,305 represent recovery of deposits, etc., Rs. 11,333 were received from cesses and Rs. 2,671 from pounds; Rs 5,623 from bazars and Rs. 9,693 was the Government contribution. The total expenditure, exclusive of recoveries and advances, came to Rs. 39,286. Of this Rs. 19,608 went on education; Rs. 5,284 on dispensaries and sanitation; Rs. 1,046 on the veterinary establishment; and Rs 5,479 on contributions towards the upkeep of provincial roads. The closing balance was Rs. 9,826.

District Sanitary Board.

229 Up to 1898-99, Rs. 8,370 were spent on new or existing wells. Nothing was spent between that date and 1902-03 when one well was built and 5 repaired at a cost of Rs. 238-8-0.

In 1903-04, one well was built and 8 repaired at a cost of Rs. 354, of which Rs. 110 were provided by public subscription. In 1904-05, Rs. 2,058 were spent on building 6 new wells; considerable help towards this was received from local sources, but details are not available.

Excise.

230. The excise systems prevailing in this District are the Sadar distillery and the outstill systems.

Under both systems the material used for distillation is the flower of the mahuā tree which matures and falls in the month of April. Under the Sadar distillery system, spirit is distilled in the Government distillery building, under the supervision of a distillery muharrir, and thence distributed to the subordinate shops, under cover of a pass book.

The revenue is realised from a duty levied by weight on the mahuā used for distillation, and from license fees covering the right of distillation and sale. Out of 3,132 square miles (which is the area of the Bālāghāt District) only 172 square miles are under the Sadar distillery system and in the remaining portion of the District the outstill system is in force. The Sadar distillery building is situated in the headquarter town on the Bālāghāt-Baihar road and serves an area immediately surrounding the District headquarters. The average revenue of the Sadar distillery is Rs. 5,575 and the still-head duty is about Rs 3,075.

The area under the outstill system is divided into outstill circles, in each of which one still and a certain number of shops for retail sale are allowed. The number and locality of the shops are fixed by the Deputy Commissioner, and all variations require his sanction. The revenue under the outstill system is derived from license fees for the right of manufacture at the outstills and of sale at the shops. There are 88 outstill circles in the District bringing in an average revenue of Rs. 41,358 The number of shops in the Sadar distillery circle was, up to 1905, 76: and there were 358 outstill shops. This gave a shop for every 7·2 square

miles and every 752 persons, undoubtedly too high a number, and a considerable reduction of shops has been undertaken. The number for the year 1906-07 will stand at 207 and 61 respectively for outstill and Sadar areas. In spite of this, the Government demand has largely risen.

The excise income is one of the surest tests of the prosperity of the labouring classes, especially the income from country liquor, and the fluctuations of this income are an indication of the severe blow to the prosperity of the District inflicted by the famine.

The revenue from country liquor was at its highest in 1894-95, when it stood at Rs. 96,036. In the same year the receipts from opium stood at Rs. 49,889 and from *gānja* at Rs. 20,011.

The famine of 1896-97 and the preceding years of scarcity caused a decline in the receipts from country liquor to Rs. 23,395 in 1897-98. The opium receipts fell to Rs. 30,152 and *gānja* receipts to Rs. 10,171. The figures of the year 1904-05 exhibit a return towards normal, the total receipts being Rs. 1,18,395, of which Rs. 16,375 were from hemp drugs, Rs 46,923 from opium and Rs. 55,092 from country liquor. Receipts in the year 1905-06 are expected to reach about Rs. 1,50,000

Owing to the increased demand for labour, the working classes have recovered to a far greater extent than those better-to-do, but, since the great depletion in their numbers caused by famine and emigration has not yet been made good, the income has not yet returned to its original level There is no private excise management now in the District. Up to the last settlement, the zamīndārs of Chauria and Bījāgarh held the right to farm liquor on a *takolī* of R. 1 and Rs. 5 respectively: these sums were left, apparently by an oversight, without enhancement, though the settlement agreement provided for a readjustment of the revenue every 3 years: and the zamīndārs drew a considerable revenue from this source by allowing an inordinate number of shops and stills.

Various other zamīndārs had excise rights at the 30 years' settlement.

231. The right of retail sale of opium in each place where a shop is allowed by the Government is leased annually by auction under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioner. The lessees obtain opium from the Government treasury at the rate of Rs. 22 a seer and usually sell to the public at a rate of 6 to 8 annas a tola or Rs. 35 a seer. There were till 1905 51 opium shops in the District, fetching an average annual revenue of Rs. 7,000. The number of shops has since been reduced to 32.

Opium, gānjā and salt.

*Gānjā* used to be supplied to retail vendors by the wholesale vendor, who obtained a contract annually by tender, subject to confirmation by the Commissioner of Excise; the wholesale vendor sold *gānjā* to the retail vendors at Rs. 5 a seer, the latter purchasing the right of vend by auction and selling *gānjā* to the public at 2 annas a tolā or Rs. 10 a seer. Under recent orders, however, the right of wholesale vend is open free of charge to any person who cares to apply for it, and he may sell at whatever price he likes

There are 51 *gānjā* shops in this District bringing in an average revenue of Rs. 4,000 a year. There is no opium smuggling, it is believed; but there is probably a good deal of illicit distillation.

The old salt line from Saugor to the Godāvari entered the District along the Seonī-Katangī road, and passes through Katerā, where there was a *nāka*, to the Waingangā. This was abolished in 1870 as the establishment of a line to include Nimār and Berār made it unnecessary.

232. There are 5 dispensaries in this District, *i.e.*, the main dispensary at Bālāghāt and branch dispensaries at Wārāseonī, Baihar, Katangī and Lānjī. The Bālāghāt main dispensary has been provided with accommodation for 16 indoor patients; all

Dispensaries.

other dispensaries treat only out-patients. The total number of patients treated during the year 1904 was :—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Indoor | ... | ... 111 |
| Outdoor | .. | ... 33,656 |

These were treated at the following dispensaries :—

| | Indoor. | Outdoor. |
|---|---|---|
| Bālāghāt | 111 | 15,601 |
| Wārāseonī | ... | 5,866 |
| Baihar | ... | 4,639 |
| Katangī | ... | 7,550 |

The total income of the dispensaries was Rs. 7,782 derived from the following sources :—

| | | | | Rs. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Government grants | | ... | ... | 3,430 |
| Local funds | ... | ... | ... | 1,872 |
| Subscriptions | ... | ... | ... | 2,033 |

Besides this, the Baihar dispensary possesses an invested capital of Rs. 1,500.

A total expenditure of Rs 6,790 left the dispensaries with a closing balance of Rs 3,003. An out-patients' ward is now under erection at Baihar; and quarters for the Hospital Assistant will shortly be commenced at Lānji

233 The Vaccination Act has been extended to the municipality of Bālāghāt only: and in the rest of the District vaccination is optional. The vaccination staff consists of a superintendent, 6 vaccinators and 2 peons, and its total cost in 1904-05 was Rs. 1,480, all of which, save Rs 68, was provided from local funds. A total of 11,620 persons were successfully vaccinated or revaccinated during the year at an average cost of R. 0-2-3, the highest of any District in the Central Provinces. Of these 687 were vaccinated at dispensaries. The annual mortality from small-pox was as high as 516 in the year 1902-03, while it stood at 2 persons only in 1898-99. The proportion of the population annually protected by vaccination during the last seven years has

Vaccination.

varied between 21·24 per 1000 in 1901-02 and 33·26 in 1899-00.

Registration.

234. The total number of compulsory registrations of documents affecting land was 185 in 1904, and the aggregate value of the property involved was Rs. 88,386. The number of optional registrations affecting immovable property was five and the property involved was valued at Rs. 8,032 There were no registrations affecting movable property, and only two wills were registered. The total receipts in fees of all sorts were Rs. 1,379 and the expenditure Rs. 690. These figures are below the normal and the decline is mainly due to the conciliation operations in the preceding years This is especially noticeable in the statistics for sales and mortgages of agricultural land. Four villages and 14 shares of villages held in full right and one village and two shares of villages held in inferior proprietary right were sold in 1904; four villages and 14 shares in villages held in full right, and one share of a village held in inferior proprietary right were mortgaged in the same year; while only 30 sale deeds and seven mortgage deeds affecting *mālik-makbūzas* and absolute occupancy tenants were registered. The Deputy Commissioner is District Registrar, with a sub-registrar specially empowered at headquarters; another sub-registration office exists at Baihar in charge of the Tahsildār. Wārāseoni used to possess a sub-registration office up to the year 1905, when it was abolished.

Education.

235. There are four middle schools in the District, three of which are vernacular middle schools The average daily attendance at these was 396 in 1904-05. There were in 1904-05, 61 primary schools for boys and 2 primary girls' schools in the District: the average daily attendance at these was 2,399 and 29 respectively. The total number of children enrolled as scholars at all schools in 1904-05 was exactly 5,000, or 10·2 per cent. on the children of school-going age. The percentage in 1905-06 was 11·7, as against only 5·7 in 1891-92. The average

number of villages per primary school all over the District is 21 : it is thus apparent that there must be many villages that are not even yet within reach of a primary school ; in fact not less than 20 more schools are still needed to enable all children in the open parts of the country to attend. The expenditure on education in 1904-05 was as follows :—

| | Rs. |
|---|---|
| Provincial grant ... ... ... | 5,838 |
| Local funds .. ... ... | 17,512 |
| Fees . . ... .. ... | 2,246 |
| Other sources ... ... ... | 568 |
| Total ... | 26,164 |

There are two girls' schools at Wārāseonī and Bālāghāt; the average daily attendance in 1904-05 was 29 Almost all the schools in the District have now been provided with suitable buildings, and it is only in the case of one or two recently established schools that the scholars meet in the mālguzār's house. Most of the schools are well built and the few inadequate buildings are being gradually replaced. An attempt has been made to allow, so far as possible, about 7 square feet of plinth area for each scholar attending It is the exception to find a school without a more or less successful garden, the Lānji school being specially notable for its achievement in this respect. There is no active opposition in the District to education, indeed in many places it is welcomed ; the people are eager to have a school in their village and are ready to assist in building it. The zamindār of Hattā has built a school at the village where he resides. The Bālāghāt mission has two schools, one at Baihar and one at Nikkum. The children taught at the former are almost entirely orphans under the care of the mission.

The District does not take a high rank in literacy, standing 12th on the list in 1901 with only 44 male literates per 1,000. and one female. Out of the 22 literates per 1,000 of both sexes, 20 4 were literate in Hindi, and 1·8 in

Marāthī. The increase in the number of scholars of late years should cause a great improvement in the literacy of the district at the next census.

Village schoolmasters.

236. The village schoolmaster is a man with a good deal of influence. He is postmaster and stamp-vendor also, as a rule, in villages where there is a post office: he is also letter-writer, and shares with the patwāri the position of legal adviser of first instance. Perhaps he takes in a copy of some newspaper and regales the more intelligent villagers with fragments of news from it: and he occasionally sends contributions to the press in the form of local news. A good schoolmaster is a great civilising agent in a village, and he is usually by the force of circumstances on the side of the poorer and weaker classes. Very little prejudice exists in the District regarding Mahārs, but the people do not approve of a Mahār headmaster and they strongly object to his beating their children, as it involves Kunbī or Ponwār parents in the expense of a caste feast. After the children leave school only too many of them forget nearly all they have learned, and hardly remember much more than how to sign their names. Putting aside zamīndārs and officials, hardly one village in a hundred contains a regular subscriber to a newspaper and it is by no means in every village, even in the open and civilised tracts, that books can be found. Such works as the Ramāyan, and the Premsāgar are the general favourites and many mālguzārs who read them are glad to welcome their friends and neighbours who care to listen; but the desire to do so is by no means widespread and as one such mālguzār said, 'If you stop speaking about ordinary things and start a book, they will pretend to listen for a little, but in a short time they will all sneak away without even saying good evening.' The favourite local newspaper is the 'Bangabāsi;' but the Central Provinces 'Agricultural Gazette' probably equals if not surpasses it in point of circulation, and is read with interest by many The provision of occa-

sional village libraries containing a few books of general interest is now being arranged for by a private committee of native gentlemen.

Administration of justice in early times

237. The old 'Bhandāra Gazetteer' has some interesting remarks regarding the administration of justice in Marāthā times.

'There were no established Courts of Justice during 'the Marāthā reign, but *kamaishdārs* and patels administered 'justice according to their own notions of right. There 'was no written law or custom which was either well 'understood or generally accepted. In matters of succes-'sion, the Muhammadan law in the case of Muhammadans, 'and the Hindu law in the case of Hindus, was usually 'followed. Suits of above one thousand rupees in value 'generally came before the Rājā, who either decided them 'himself or referred them for decision to a *panchāyat; ka-'maishdārs* were assisted by the *pharnavises, barārpāndyas* 'and head patels of their subdivisions. A fee of one-fourth, 'called *shukrāna*, was levied from the winning party in all 'suits decided, and an equal sum was imposed on the party 'who lost, as fine. These sums were paid to Government. 'A fee of from five to ten rupees, called *bhāt masāla*, was 'also paid to the *kamaishdār*, to defray the expense of 'summoning the defendants. The person summoned had 'also to support the man who served the summons on him. 'In each village there was a *mahājan*, or arbitrator, who 'was chosen by the patels and cultivators for the adjudica-'tion of their disputes. Among the lower classes the heads 'of the castes, styled *sendyās*, decided disputes referred to 'them. If the parties were dissatisfied, a *panchāyat* of *sendyās* 'was convened, whose decision was generally final; the '*mahājans* and *sendyās* were always persons of considerable 'consequence in their respective communities. Civil cases 'were decided by *panchāyats*. These generally assembled 'at a *chabūtra* (platform) where an idol of Mahadeo was 'placed, which was supposed to give the sanctity of an oath

'to any statement made there. The plaintiff, if a man of 'wealth, provided victuals, betel, tobacco, etc., for the members. Among the Gonds he provided liquor. The proceedings of ordinary village *panchāyats* were rarely recorded, except in the case of those assembled by the higher 'authorities, when the sentence needed confirmation The 'duty of seeing the decision carried into effect devolved on 'the person under whose authority the *panchāyat* was 'assembled In criminal cases patels imposed small fines 'for petty offences. Offenders taken to the *thānās* were 'generally flogged and confined in the stocks for fifteen, 'twenty, or thirty days, and, if they were in a condition to 'pay, fines were imposed on them. For house-breaking 'and theft they were punished at times by imprisonment in 'irons, confiscation of goods, flogging, detention in the 'stocks, and fine. For second offences they were punished 'by mutilation of hands, nose and fingers. If the person 'robbed was also wounded, the punishment was generally 'mutilation; if murdered, the award was death; Brāhmans 'and women were excepted from this rule. Women guilty 'of the murder of their husbands were punished sometimes 'with mutilation of their noses. Pecuniary compensation 'was sometimes allowed if the relatives of the deceased 'agreed to the arrangement, the ordinary payment being 'Rs. 350 to the heirs of the person murdered. Coiners had 'one of their hands crushed to pieces with a blow from a 'heavy mallet or pestle. For fornication, the person named 'by the woman was charged with the offence and fined 'heavily, part of the fine being carried to the Government 'account, and part taken by the officer imposing the fine The 'woman was then made over to her caste people to be dealt 'with according to their award'

Recent criminal administration

238. Turning to more recent times, the earliest accounts of the District speak of constant raids by the hill tribes on the dwellers in the plains, the Hindi expression

for which (*Gondī karnā*) is significant of the caste mainly responsible for them. Several of the zamīndāris, especially Bāmhangaon and Bhādra, were established to repress their raids, but the zamīndārs more often shared the plunder and contented themselves with amusing the Nāgpur Government by long and circumstantial accounts of desperate fights and great victories over the raiders. With these exceptions, even before the sixties the District was fairly free from crime, save in the Katangī tract, where numerous dacoities were committed by the Golars of Chakahcti and their adherents.

In more recent times the 'Vilāyatīs' or Kābulis of Bahelā had an unenviable reputation as criminals: while in the eighties, Umedsingh of Hirrī, a member of the Rājput zamīndari family of Bāmhangaon, was a noted leader of dacoits; his career of crime was finally closed by his conviction for a dacoity at Kholmāra and his sentence to a long term of imprisonment. In Baihar the Pardhāns and Pankās bore at one time a worse reputation for crime, especially cattle stealing, than they do now, when the proportion of the caste who are addicted to crime is small and the nature of the offences committed by them petty. The Kanjars and Banjārās of east Bhimlāt have from time to time used the jungles of Sāletekri and upper Kawardhā as a hiding place for cattle stolen from this District or from the plains of Chattīsgarh; while there are a few isolated instances of crimes committed in the extreme east and north of the tahsīl by Satnāmi Chamārs from lower Kawardha.

In the Bālāghāt tahsil none of the resident castes have proved especially troublesome. The villages of Mehdīwāra and Kāranja have a rather bad reputation for petty crime and assaults. Wandering gangs of Mang Garorīs and other such castes occasionally visit the District and commit petty thefts from bazars and shops; parties of Irānis or Baluchis, locally known as Habshīs, not infrequently traverse the west of the District and Baihar, where they are much

feared. They often force the inhabitants of the jungly villages to purchase cutlery and similar articles at absurdly high prices, and usually extort free food for themselves and their animals, while they are very prone to snap up any fowls or goats that they may see. The District does not possess sufficient accumulated wealth to tempt the more serious criminals such as Badaks or Moghias to frequent visits; though one such gang was captured in 1903, and now that the District is traversed by a railway, it is likely that they may turn their attention to Bālāghāt.

Crime statistics

239. To turn to details of crime statistics; the total number of cases reported to the police was 658 in 1891, and, judging by the figures of recent years, this seems a normal standard. In the famine years, however, the number of cases rose considerably, standing at 1,127 in 1895, and at 2,067 in 1897. In 1891, 462 persons were convicted, 822 in 1895, and 1,482 in 1897. The year 1895 was the first of the dry years that occasioned a more or less complete failure of the rice crop. The number of persons convicted for theft and house-breaking was 222 in 1891, 619 in 1897, and 77 in 1904. Most of the criminal statistics in the last few years are equally low; even the crop failure of 1902-03 was unable to raise them. The numbers of the labouring classes had been so much reduced in the preceding famines and the demand for labour was so keen that the poorer classes were probably never better off than they have been for the last 4 years. The effect of famine conditions on a large labouring population is seen by the great rise of crime figures in 1895 above alluded to. Murder, rioting, grievous hurt, and dacoity, all reached high-water mark in these years of distress Most of the above forms of crime were the necessary outcome of attempts of large bodies of hungry villagers to help themselves from the stores of those better provided than themselves. Cattle-theft was very prevalent in both famine years, the figures of persons convicted of this offence being 616 in 1897, and 176

in 1900. In no other year, however, than in the years of drought and distress have more than 43 persons been convicted for this offence. The effect on theft of cattle registration, which is more extensively practised in Bālāghāt than in almost any District, has probably not been small.

The District is a peaceful and law-abiding one and no forms of crime are especially prevalent, except perhaps excise cases. Forest offences have shown remarkable fluctuations, being probably affected more by the policy pursued from year to year by the local forest officials than by economic conditions. Opium smuggling is probably as nearly non-existent as in any District in the Central Provinces.

Jail

240. The District Jail was built in 1875, prisoners sentenced to more than 14 days imprisonment having previously been sent to Bhandāra. It is a fourth class Jail, with accommodation for 63 prisoners. The average daily number of convicts in 1905 was 46 and of under-trials 9, which was much below the general average. The Jail possesses an extensive garden, and considerable areas planted with aloes, the extraction of fibre from which will, it is hoped, be a staple industry for convicts. Oil-pressing, *newār*-making and metal-breaking are also Jail industries. It is under the charge of the Civil Surgeon as Superintendent.

Police.

241. The District is divided into 5 Station-house circles with 11 outposts attached to them; the Bālāghāt Station-house also has a road-post at Rajegaon on the Gondia road. The District has thus the smallest number of police posts of any District in the Central Provinces, and the police work is probably the lightest. Apart from railway cases, the only crimes that occur are a few house-breakings in the towns, some cattle thefts in the rural area, especially in the wild uplands of eastern Baihar where fugitives from Chhattīsgarh often flee with stolen cattle, and occasional petty thefts by wandering tribes. The strength of the force in February 1905 was 46 officers, 187

men and 3 *sowārs*. The chief castes enlisted are Muhammadans 83, Brāhmans 52, Rājputs 31, Pardhāns 17, Ponwārs 8. The last two castes are locally recruited. The work of supervision is divided between two Circle Inspectors, with headquarters at Baihar and Bālāghāt respectively. There is a District Superintendent of Police at Bālāghāt and a Headquarters Inspector, but an Assistant District Superintendent of Police is seldom posted to the District. The jurisdiction of the police over the railway extends northwards as far as the border of the Jubbulpore District.

The cost of the District police in 1904 was Rs. 42,404 of which Rs. 14,853 was on account of pay of constables, Rs. 10,585 on account of pay of subordinate officers, and Rs. 3,219 on account of contingencies. Of the total police force of the District, 25 officers and 137 men were engaged in the actual prevention and detection of crime, as opposed to guard, court and clerical duties. The proportion of police to population was 1 policeman to 1,372 persons, and there was one constable to every 13 square miles of area. In the year 1904, 520 cognisable crimes were reported, or 3 per head of the force engaged in the actual prevention of crime

Public Works.

242. The roads and buildings of the District are under the charge of the Executive Engineer, Bhandāra, assisted by Subdivisional Officers at Baihar and Bālāghāt. The portion of the District to the west of Wārāseonī is under the Subdivisional Officer at Bhandāra. There are 223 miles of road in the District, constructed at a cost of Rs. 13,16,107, of which 22 miles are of class I, 118 miles II-A and 83 miles II-B The total value of the buildings in the District on the books of the Department amounts to Rs. 2,59,264: of which residential bungalows at headquarters account for Rs. 33,149; headquarters offices, Rs. 1,39,436; police buildings away from headquarters Rs. 38,299; inspection and dâk bungalows throughout the District, Rs. 31,425, and tahsīl and other Government offices away from headquarters, Rs. 16,955.

Irrigation.

243. The irrigation works of the District are under the charge of the Executive Engineer, Irrigation Department, whose headquarters are at Kamptee. The works constructed by the Irrigation Department hitherto have been of three kinds. The grant-in-aid tanks, of which 15 have been made at a cost up to December 1906 of Rs. 44,513, are all in the Bālāghāt tahsil. These were started during the crop failure of 1902-03: half the cost was borne by Government and half by the proprietors of the villages for the benefit of whom the tanks were built. The mālguzārs will benefit by the protection of their home farms and by enhancing the rents of the tenants who take water, and Government will receive its share of this enhancement at settlement. These tanks will irrigate 3,178 acres.

The next class of work undertaken consisted of the ryotwāri village tanks. These are intended to protect ryotwāri villages and to assist in the colonisation of the Government estates in Baihar.

Seventeen such tanks were built or under construction at a cost of Rs 93,334 up to the end of 1906. These tanks will when complete irrigate 3,681 acres. Plans and estimates for more tanks are being prepared.

Simultaneously with the grant-in-aid tanks the construction of a number of purely Government works was begun, of which two have been completed at a cost of Rs. 73,072, protecting 2,854 acres. It is proposed to protect Karolā and Katangī by a chain of storage works, situated on the various nullahs that flow from the Sonewāni hills, varying in cost from several lakhs to Rs 30,000 or Rs. 40,000. Estimates are also being prepared for canals from the Waingangā, Son and Bāgh rivers as well as for storage works in other parts of the District, and there is little reason to doubt but that by far the greater part of the District can be efficiently protected by irrigation.

Stamps.

244. The stamp income of the District amounted in 1883 to Rs. 163 from receipt stamps, Rs 5,284 from document stamps, and

Rs. 13,230 from court fee stamps. It is from this year that the effect of the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway began to make itself felt on the trade and prosperity of the District. The result of ten almost uninterrupted good seasons was to double the income under each of the above heads, the income being in 1893 Rs. 355 from receipt stamps, Rs. 10,248 from document stamps, and Rs. 26,473 from court fee stamps. The remarkable symmetry of the increase is a testimony to the equable development of the District.

The famines of 1897 and 1900 caused violent fluctuations in the stamp revenue, the most noteworthy being a great and sudden increase in the sales of receipt stamps, especially in 1897, owing to increased advances of *takāvi* and petty contracts on famine relief works, a violent drop in document stamps in both 1897 and 1900, owing to the restriction of credit, and a sharp decline in 1897 and 1898, followed in 1899 by a revival, in the sales of court fee stamps, when creditors, whom the previous bad seasons had deterred from going into court, made a final attempt to prevent their debts being time-barred The famine of 1900, however, dealt the litigation of the District a blow from which it had scarcely begun to recover when the conciliation proceedings of 1902-03 again threw it back At the present time (1905), the sales of receipt stamps have risen to Rs 596, a fairly normal figure: document stamps and court fee stamps are still very low at Rs. 6,118 and Rs. 16,282 respectively, but are showing signs of steady recovery. Considering the severe depletion of capital and restriction of grain and cash loans which still characterise many parts of the District, the recovery in the stamp income is all that could be expected.

Treasury receipts and payments

245 The statement on the following page shows the receipts and expenditure of the District in all departments under the Comptroller during the financial year 1904-05 :—

| Receipts. | | | | Charges. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Heads. | Amount. | | | Heads. | Amount. | | |
| | Rs. | a. | p | | Rs. | a. | p. |
| I.—Land Revenue .. | 2,12,257 | 2 | 10 | 1. Refunds and drawbacks . | 141 | 15 | 4 |
| II.—Opium . | 14,883 | 8 | 0 | 2. Assignments and compensation ... | 21 | 10 | 0 |
| IV.—Stamps .. | 24,294 | 12 | 0 | 3. Land Revenue ... | 98,210 | 13 | 7 |
| V.—Excise | 1,03,518 | 3 | 0 | 6 Stamps . | 329 | 5 | 1 |
| VI.—Provincial rates .. | 20,030 | 12 | 7 | 7. Excise | 1,749 | 5 | 3 |
| VII.—Customs... | ... | | | 12 Registration .. | 744 | 3 | 8 |
| VIII.—Assessed taxes .. | 2,919 | 5 | 6 | 18. General Administration .. | 574 | 0 | 0 |
| X.—Registration . | 1,589 | 4 | 6 | 19A Law and Justice, Courts of Law... | 12,738 | 10 | 7 |
| XII.—Interest ... | 1,261 | 14 | 3 | 19B Law and Justice Jails .. | 6,476 | 5 | 9 |
| XVI.—Law and Justice, Courts of Law .. | 4,837 | 9 | 7 | 20. Police ... | 45,197 | 10 | 10 |
| XVI.—Law and Justice, Jails . | 380 | 0 | 9 | 22. Education ... | 3,872 | 2 | 0 |
| | | | | 23. Ecclesiastical .. | 60 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | | 24 Medical ... | 10,804 | 4 | 8 |
| XVII.—Police ... | 748 | 11 | 8 | 25. Political ... | ... | | |
| XIX.—Education | 42 | 0 | 0 | 26 Scientific . | 1,866 | 12 | 4 |
| XX.—Medical .. | 280 | 13 | 6 | 27. Territorial and Political ... | 171 | 0 | 0 |
| XXI.—Scientific and other Minor Departments | 531 | 1 | 0 | 29. Superannuation . | 5,258 | 2 | 11 |
| | | | | 30 Stationery and Printing .. | 229 | 0 | 6 |
| XXII.—Receipts in aid, etc .. | 1,136 | 15 | 11 | 32 Miscellaneous .. | 17,455 | 14 | 3 |
| XXIII.—Stationery and Printing ... | 5 | 6 | 11 | 33. Famine | 7 | 13 | 4 |
| XXV.—Miscellaneous . | 1,423 | 15 | 0 | 45 Civil works ... | 1,000 | 0 | 0 |
| XXXII.—Civil works | ... | | | 43 Navigation and minor civil works | 45 | 0 | 0 |
| Total ... | 3,90,158 | 0 | 0 | Total .. | 2,06,982 | 0 | 0 |

To these must be added receipts and expenditure under the Forest Department and the "Irrigation" and "Communications" divisions of the Public Works Department.

These are as follows :—

| | Receipts. | Expenditure. |
|---|---|---|
| | Rs. | Rs. |
| Forest. | 1,16,053 | 1,88,561 |
| Public Works Department— | | |
| Communications ... | 4,447 | 1,31,753 |
| Irrigation ... | 1,443 | 65,967 |
| Total ... | 1,21,943 | 3,86,281 |

The post office receipts and expenditure for the District cannot be exactly stated; but the receipts and the expenditure of the post offices which were doing business with the Bālāghāt treasury during 1904-05 were :—

| *Receipts*– | Rs. | *Payments*— | Rs. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sales of postage stamps ... | 1,746 | All heads ... | 70,869 |
| District post office receipts .. | 1,58,010 | | |
| Total ... | 1,65 756 | | |

Some Rs. 66,479 of the payments were on account of revenue money orders for *takāvi*, land revenue, etc.

Thus the total receipts and expenditure from the District treasury in the year were:—

| Receipts. | Payments. |
|---|---|
| Rs. | Rs. |
| 6,77,857 | 6,64,132 |

The most noteworthy features of these figures are the large payments made by the Forest and Public Works Departments and the comparatively large post office receipts, presumably on account of money orders payable outside the District; these sums are mostly sent away by labourers and petty contractors. A good deal of money is brought into the District in the form of notes, especially by Government contractors, to finance the works in progress; these are

largely exchanged at the Government treasury, and a good deal of money is brought into the District to finance the grain crop. Much of this finds its way back in the form of payments by importers of goods such as ironmongery, cloth and kerosine ; some comes into the Government treasury, and some is retained in the District. The question has been discussed in greater detail under the head of District railborne trade.

# APPENDIX.

## GAZETTEER OF TAHSILS, ZAMINDARIS, TOWNS, IMPORTANT VILLAGES, RIVERS AND HILLS.

## APPENDIX.

## GAZETTEER OF TAHSILS, ZAMINDARIS, TOWNS, IMPORTANT VILLAGES, RIVERS AND HILLS.

**Ahmadpur.**—A village situated at the top of the ghāt to which it gives its name, leading from Mau to the Baihar uplands.

**Bagh River.**—The Bāgh rises in the hills of the Khairāgarh Feudatory State, and forms the boundary for some distance between the Bhandāra District and the Bhādra zamīndāri of Bālāghāt. Not far from Amgaon station it receives two important tributaries from the Bhandāra District, the Kaudas and the Sathwanik, which, after their junction and before meeting the Bāgh river, are also sometimes known as the greater Bāgh. After this the Bāgh flows north-west, dividing the Bālāghāt from the Bhandāra District, and receiving as tributaries the Son, Deo and Ghisarī rivers, till it joins the Waingangā near the railway bridge at Borındā. The length of the Bāgh within the District is 47 miles.

**Bahela.**—The headquarters of the zamīndār of Bahelā or Bhādra on the lesser Bāgh river. It contains a school and police outpost. Its area is 1256 acres and its population 888 persons.

**Baihar Tahsil.**—The northern tahsīl of the District. It lies between 21°32′ to 22°24′ N and 80°2′ to 81°3′ E. Its area up to 1898 was 1451 square miles and its population in 1901 was 76,911 persons. In 1898 three square miles were added from Mandla. In 1904 it was decided to readjust the boundaries of this tahsil and the ghāt line was accordingly taken as the boundary of this and the Bālaghāt tahsil, except for the Mau pargana, the transfer of which to Bālāghāt would have made Baihar too small. The fixation of the ghāt

line as the tahsīl boundary was intended to save the tahsīl and Land Record staff of Bālāghāt constant journeys up and down the ghāt to visit outlying villages, and the opportunity was taken to increase the number of the Revenue Inspectors' circles of Baihar. At the same time 5½ square miles of forest belonging to the Mandlā District, which lay below the Bhaisānghāt near Sondhar, were taken over by Bālāghāt and 11 villages, cut off from the rest of the District by the Koilikhāpa and Toplā forests, were transferred to Mandlā. This left the tahsīl with 1744 square miles of area and a population of 86,230 persons. Of the above area and population, 484 square miles and 17,064 persons are in zamīndāri territory and 1260 square miles with 69,164 persons in *khālsa*. The Mau pargana lies in the Waingangā valley; this constitutes the best cultivated part of the tahsīl. It is traversed by the Sātpurā railway, with railway stations at Charegaon, Lāmta, Nagarwāra and Pādrīganj. There are two fine tanks in this tract at Bhondwā and Moria and several of the villages are excellent ones and contain valuable alluvial land along the Wainganga. The average rent-rate here is R. 0-8-6. Nearly all the villages are held on mālguzāri tenure by Saraswati Bai of Kochewāra, widow of a descendant of Lakshman Naik, a Marāthā cavalry leader. This tract is bordered on the east by the Paraswāra forest range, a stretch of jungle containing principally *bījāsāl*, *salai* and bamboos, lying on hilly ground, and deeply ravined by the Sāwarjhori and Mahkāri rivers and their tributaries. After mounting these hills by the Ahmadpur or Bhondwā passes, the latter of which is a made road leading from Lāmta station, the Paraswāra plateau is reached. This is drained by the Kanhār nullah into the Banjar river, which flows into the Nerbudda opposite Mandlā town. It is a fairly open stretch of country surrounded on all sides by hills and forests, and is mostly held on mālguzāri tenure by the Kochewāra mālguzārin, save the villages to the extreme north and extreme south which are ryotwāri. The tract is well cultivated and

contains a little *rabi* as well as rice. It is traversed from east to west by the Baihar-Lāmta road. The average rent-rate is R. 0-6-0 per acre: and, in the ryotwāri villages here and elsewhere in the tahsīl, about R. 0-3-5 an acre. A block of hills runs north and south across the tahsīl, separating the Kanhār valley from that of the Banjar. This is the Tīpāgarh forest block; it rises to the height of 2734 feet at the Dhukrī hill and again at Tīpāgarh. To the south of this the nullahs drain into the Nahāra and Uskal, through the Rūpjhar plateau, which is similar to the Paraswāra tract, save that it contains rather more ryotwāri villages and is less open. East of Tīpāgarh and just below it lies the town of Baihar in the Sarekha pargana. The Banjar river here flows through a wide open plain, dotted with rocky hills and patches of jungle, and is joined by the Taunaur near Karelī. This tract is nearly all ryotwāri, and the few scattered mālguzari villages are held by independent owners with an average rent-rate of R. 0-4-4 an acre. Here the *sāl* tract begins, and fine groves of these trees are found all along the Banjar river throughout its whole course through the District. East of the Sarekhā tract lies Bhīmlāt, which consists of the valleys of the Jamunia and Banjar, and is almost entirely ryotwāri. It resembles the Sarekhā tract in its physical features, save that the Jamunia valley contains a good deal of rich black soil suitable for *rabi*. South of this lie the upper zamīndāris. With the exception of the Saletekrī plain formed by the upper valley of the Banjar, the whole of this tract consists of a wild and tangled mass of hill and jungle, through which the Deo and Son rivers gradually make their way to the plain. It is inhabited by Gonds and Baigās, who practise the only method of cultivation possible among these precipitous hills, that of axe and fire, known as *bewar*. The average rent-rate of this wild tract is R. 0-3-7 per acre for the occupied portion. To the north of Bhīmlāt lies the long and precipitous wall of the Bhaisānghāt, covered with forest consisting of *sāl* at its base, but degenerating into bamboos and inferior species higher up.

The Bhaisānghāt and Lapti passes afford the only practical cart tracks across these hills. Above them lies the Raigarh plateau, at an average height of about 2200 feet above the sea; though several of its isolated hills, such as Kukrel, near Motināla, and Naktibidi in Toplā, rise to over 2900 feet. The western side of Raigarh is open, partly cultivated, and almost absolutely treeless, with the exception of a few scattered clumps of *sāl*, standing up in the middle of the plain like artificial plantations. This plateau, in spite of its open appearance, bears the reputation of being even more feverish than Baihar. It is drained by the Halon, and its tributaries the Gordhauni and Kashmīri: and is as a rule too undulating and stony for successful rice cultivation, though there are, in places, considerable stretches of black soil suitable for *rabi* crops. The inhabitants are nearly all Gonds and Pankās. The eastern part of the plateau is covered by the Koilikhāpa and Toplā forests, through which the Halon river flows, its upper valley having an altitude of 2500 feet. The characteristic features of these forests are open grass savannas, alternating with groves of *sāl;* among these rise high, flat-topped hills, covered with creepers and poor scrub jungle; where trap overlies the Chilpi beds, teak is often found.

The tahsil contains 619 villages, and there were, up to 1906, 558 revenue *mauzās*. Many of the revenue *mauzās* are not reckoned as villages for census purposes, and several census villages have been made into two or three revenue *mauzās* Thus there is a Keslai mālguzāri and adjoining it a Keslai ryotwāri and a Keslai forest village. The total area included in patwāri circles in the Baihar tahsil is 690,539 acres, or very nearly 1079 square miles. Government forest occupies 664 square miles, included in the Paraswāra, Baihar and Raigarh ranges and part of the Dhansuā range. The average rainfall for the tahsil over the 26 years ending in 1899-1900 was 61 inches The density of population per square mile is 49 persons. The number of persons in 1891 occupying the area now constituting the tahsil was 91,860. The principal castes

that inhabit the tahsīl are Gonds and Baigās in the jungly tracts, and Ponwārs and Mahārs in the more open plains; Pardhāns are found wherever there are Gonds, and Pankās live chiefly near Dhīpur, in the Jamunia valley, in east Bhīmlāt and in several villages in Raigarh. They bear a rather bad character. Raigarh, Toplā, the upper zamīndāris and the forest tracts are almost entirely peopled by Gonds, Baigās and Pardhāns. In Sāletekrī there are a good many Banjārās and Ahīrs besides Gonds. The open tracts of Bhīmlāt, Sarekhā, and Paraswāra contain Ponwars, Gonds and Mahārs, the former predominating in Mau. The tahsīl contains the following parganas: Mau, a continuation of the Waingangā valley north of Dhansuā in the Bālāghāt tahsīl: Paraswāra, to the east of Mau and above the ghāts: east of this and lying round Baihar village the Sarekhā pargana: east, again, of this the Bhīmlāt pargana: north of Bhīmlat the Raigarh pargana, above the Bhaisānghāt: and south of Bhīmlāt the above ghāt portions of the Bhānpur, Kīnhi, and Sāletekrī zamīndāris and the Chauria zamīndarī. The area in Baihar held by ryotwāri patels in 1904-05 was 10,382 acres, on a revenue of Rs. 2922. A total of 3932 Government ryots held 85,953 acres on a revenue of Rs. 16,460; and 1077 acres were held revenue-free as village service grants. In the mālguzāri area of Baihar, 101,344 acres were included in holdings, of which 70,451 acres were situated in the *khālsa* and 30,893 acres in zamīndāris. An area of 9920 acres was held as *sīr* and 4398 as *khudkāsht*. Absolute occupancy tenants held 4487 acres at a rental of Rs. 1,625, occupancy tenants held 13,334 acres at a rental of Rs. 5,164, and 87,262 acres were rented at Rs. 46,216 by ordinary tenants.

In 1906 the readjustment of ryotwāri village areas reduced the number of ryotwāri villages to 235 with an area of 214,484 acres.

In 1904-05 198,532 acres were occupied for cultivation, of which 129,654 acres were cropped: 58,604 acres were under rice; 48,317 under kodon and kutkī, 2056 acres

under wheat and 3217 acres under gram; 16,532 acres were recorded as irrigated. There are 15 tanks built by the Irrigation Department for the benefit of ryotwāri villages. The mālguzāri land revenue in 1904-05 was Rs. 14,385, the zamīndāri *takolī* was Rs. 80 and the ryotwāri demand Rs. 19,464. The demand for cesses was Rs. 4,463. All villages are allowed grazing on commutation in Government forests; the payment of grazing commutation is compulsory in ryotwāri villages, save where they are especially exempted. A *nistār* plough-rate is levied from persons who gather wood, bamboos, grass and mahuā from the Government forests. The demand for grazing and *nistār* commutation in 1904-05 was Rs. 7,368 and Rs. 12,073 respectively.

The tahsīl suffered severely from the 1896-97 famine and subsequent bad years: even before this the *rabi* crops of Raigarh had been seriously affected by the rust of the years 1893—1895, and the following series of dry years retarded the recovery of the tract to a serious extent. Large stretches of waste land are still to be seen that were abandoned at this time: but with the liberal assistance that Government has vouchsafed in recent years, the cropped area is recovering slowly in spite of bad seasons The area under transplanted rice has risen from 16,495 acres in 1900-01 to 28,782 in 1903-04, and again to 34,157 in 1904-05. Unfortunately the tahsil seems unable to attain a really prosperous year With the exception of 1903-04, no year has given a really full rice crop since 1894.

Attempts are now being made to improve the valuable ryotwari estates of Government in this tahsīl. A sum of Rs 10,000 a year is now allotted for tank and well construction, and advances to colonists; abandoned and poverty-stricken villages are being taken up by energetic patels of good cultivating castes, who are inducing cultivators to come from the plains and take possession of the fertile lands that await them.

Baihar contains 8 branch post offices and a sub-office at Baihar, to which it is hoped shortly to add a telegraph office. Though two post offices have recently been opened in the ryotwāri tract, facilities are still scarcely adequate and another post office is urgently needed in the neighbourhood of Sarekhā. The tahsīl contains 17 Government primary and 2 mission schools. The attendance, especially at the schools which have been opened to serve the ryotwāri tract, is good and it is not uncommon to see a village with a population of 150 all told containing a school with 80 or 90 boys drawn from surrounding villages. The recent attempts of Government to improve its ryotwāri estate by building tanks and wells, encouraging the growing of transplanted rice, and opening schools and post offices, have certainly had an indirect effect on the people, in raising their standard of comfort, improving their agricultural methods and implanting in them a sense of the benefits of education.

The tahsīl contains 7 police posts, including two Station-houses at Paraswara and Baihar, and is under the charge of a Circle Sub-Inspector.

The important bazars of the tahsīl are at Mau, Mohgaon (Birsā), Damoh, Gudmā, Bodā and Bhīri.

**Baihar Village** —The headquarters of the upland tahsīl. It is situated at a point 1816 feet above the sea; 41 miles from Bālāghāt and 32 from Lāmta by made road. Its population in 1901 was 1298 against 708 in 1891, but in 1906 it was enumerated as over 1700, its area is 5772 acres which pay only Rs. 140 land revenue: the mālguzar is a Brāhman trader and landowner. There is also an area of 155 acres *nazūl* land containing the tahsīl station and 1835 acres of ryotwāri land. The village is situated on a high rolling plateau sloping down from Tīpāgarh hill to the Taunaur. It consists of some seven or eight hamlets. The principal one is near the tahsili. There are two tanks built by the Irrigation Department: one is intended for the use of the people for bathing and watering their cattle and the other for irrigation,

There are 2 or 3 traders in the village and a fair amount of business is done. There is a moderate weekly bazar. The village is the headquarters of subdivisions of both the Irrigation and Communications branches of the Public Works Department; the latter is under an Assistant Engineer. The tahsīl officials are the Tahsīldār and two Nāib-Tahsīldārs, one of whom is specially in charge of ryotwāri, and the Circle Inspector and Sub-Inspector of Police. There is also a Forest Ranger and a Subdivisional Officer of Irrigation. The tahsīli, inspection bungalow, Public Works Department offices and quarters, Police Station-house and lines, dispensary and school, are the principal official buildings. There is a forest range headquarters, a liquor still, and two *sarais*. The Bālāghāt mission has an orphanage and school here. The tahsīli is surrounded by neatly kept grounds; there are several wells and a public garden, which has done good work in distributing improved vegetable seeds among local cultivators. The Baihar club, founded by Mr. R. S. Thākur, late Tahsīldār, is a neat building, pleasantly situated among trees, with a tennis court. It is kept up by the local officials. The place unfortunately suffers from its notoriously feverish climate. Though comparatively open and free from jungle, a particularly virulent type of fever is easily contracted in September and October. Baihar contains also architectural remains of some pretension for this District, in the form of two small temples, one of which is richly carved, and the remains of a third standing above what must once have been a series of tanks, to the north-east of the tahsīli. There are several other carved stones in various places in the village; but there is no local tradition as to their origin

**Balaghat Tahsil**—Is the western and lower lying of the two tahsils. Its limits extend from 21° 19′ to 22° 5′ N. and 79° 39′ to 80° 45′ E.

In 1901 the area of the tahsīl was 1687 square miles and its population 249,610 persons. In 1904 a large portion of the above ghāt tract of Kinhi and Bhānpur and the Rūpjhar

Photo-Etching. Roorkee College.

OLD TEMPLES AT BAIHAR

plateau were transferred to Baihar, and a portion of the Bījāgarh zamīndāri to Bālāghāt, to make the boundary of the two tahsīls follow the ghāt line. The area of the tahsil as thus constituted was 1388 square miles and its population 239,141 persons. The population in 1891 of the area now constituting the tahsīl was 268,108 persons.

The tahsīl generally consists of a wide level plain, lying on each side of the Waingangā river. To the west of the river are the extensive plains of Karolā and Katangī, with the Sonewāni forest to their north North Karolā contains mostly fine black soil and grows a good deal of broadcasted rice with a second crop. Yet here, as elsewhere, transplanted rice is the most important crop. South Karolā and east Katangī are alike sandy plains, with a few low-lying hills: they contain the best rice land in the District West Katangī is mostly a brown soil area, shading into a jungly and undulating tract in the west and south-west. There is a good deal of *rabi* and double cropping and many of the fields are embanked for wheat The Sonewāni forest range includes 107 square miles, comprised in the large mountainous tract to the north of the tahsīl, and in several scattered patches in the plains below. On the east of the river are, to the north, Dhansuā and the Hattā zamīndāri, both of which are mostly of rich black soil growing *rabi* mostly as a second crop after rice, with a strip of yellow soil nearer the hills. The rest of the tahsīl, which is comprised in the Lānji pargana, and the Bhādra (or Bahelā), Kirnāpur, Bhānpur, Kīnhi and minor zamīndāris, is mostly brown soil, with alluvial deposits along the Son and Deo rivers The tahsīl includes large areas of zamīndāri forest in Bhādra, Bijāgarh, and the below ghat parts of Bhanpur and Kinhi, as well as in the Dhansuā forest range. The total area of the range is 270 square miles, of which some 190 square miles are situated in this tahsil, comprised in the blocks of Railipailī and Dhīri Manglī near Lānji, Batkari near Bhānpur, and the

main or Dhansuā block on the top of the ghāts opposite Bālāghāt town.

The tahsīl is administered by a Tahsīldār and a Naib. The civil work is dealt with by a Munsiff. The tahsīl building is close to the court house; it was erected in 1905. The tahsīl is divided into four Revenue Inspectors' circles, Lānji, Kirnāpur, Lingā and Wārāseonī. These circles, contain the number of *mauzās* and patwāri circles shown below:—

| | Mauzās | Circles. |
|---|---|---|
| Lānji ... | ... 178 | ... 17 |
| Kirnāpur ... | ... 150 | ... 19 |
| Lingā ... | ... 161 | ... 21 |
| Wārāseonī | 144 | ... 22 |
| Total | ... 633 | ... 79 |

Of the above *mauzās*, 414 are *khālsa* and 219 zamīndāri, counting the entire Bhānpur tract in the latter class.

The rainfall of the tahsīl is measured at the following places:—

| | Inches | |
|---|---|---|
| Bālāghāt ... | 64·87 | Average for 33 years. |
| Katangī ... | 40·9 | (Established 1900.) |
| Lānji .. | 51·04 | (For last 9 years.) |
| Warāseonī ... | ... | (Established 1906 in which year it slightly exceeded the Bālāghāt total for the year.) |

The heaviest rainfall of the tahsīl is below the eastern ghāts, and the average rapidly diminishes as one goes westward, but the fall in the Sonewāni hills is probably a good deal heavier than in the plain tracts below them.

The principal castes of the tahsīl are Ponwārs in the west and north of the District; Kunbīs in the north of Karolā and in the south of the tahsīl in Bhādra and Lānji; Manās in Lānji; Lodhis in Hattā, Lānji, and near Bālāghāt; Marārs

nearly everywhere where there is alluvial soil; Gonds everywhere near the forests and especially west of the Wainganga. Mahārs are numerous, especially in the weaving villages near Wāraseoni and Katangī. Koshtās are mostly confined to Wārāseonī, Bālāghat and Mehdīwāra. Barais (*pan*-growers) are found in Lānji.

The groups at settlement followed the various parganas already described, save that Karolā and Katangī were divided into two groups each. The leading characteristics of the groups and the average rent-rate as imposed at settlement are as follows:—

West Katangī contains a good deal of poor jungly land, and a high proportion of embanked wheat land; irrigation is extensive but very insecure. *Lākhorī* here and in east Katangī takes the place of urad in other brown soil groups as the leading second crop after rice. Both this and east Katangī are very liable to shortage of rain and are a good deal deteriorated. The average all-round rent-rate is R. 1-5-2 an acre.

East Katangī resembles the last group. Wheat is important in both groups. Linseed and *lakhori* are the chief second crops. The all-round rent-rate is R. 1-3-1 an acre.

South Karolā.—Irrigation is extensive and comparatively secure. There is less *rabi* and double cropping, but a great deal of light *rabi* such as *kulthā*. The group grows the best rice of the District and many of its villages are fairly secure against famine. Its average rent-rate is R. 1-0-3 an acre.

North Karolā is a rich black soil tract with a great deal of wheat and double cropping. A large proportion of the rice is broadcast. Irrigation is up to the average, but the tract is much deteriorated and overgrown with *kāns*. Wheat, linseed and *lakhori* are the important second crops. The all-round rent-rate is R. 1-4-10 an acre.

Dhansuā.—There is a good deal of black soil here; and much of the rice is broadcast. Urad is the most important double crop. Irrigation is scanty. The group is not however very liable to famine. The average rent-rate is R. 1-4-0 an acre.

Lanji.—Urad, *lākhorī* and linseed are sown in about equal proportions. The best sugarcane of the District is grown here. Double cropping is extensively practised. The average rental is R. 0-14-11 an acre.

In Hattā, gram and wheat are important. Urad and linseed are the chief second crops There is a good deal of broadcast rice. About half the zamīndāri contains very rich black soil and the rest is light soil. The irrigation is scanty, but the group is not specially liable to famine. The average rent-rate is R. 1-0-11 an acre.

Bhādra —This and the Lānji group are the least liable to famine in the District. The soil is mostly brown. *Lākhorī* and linseed are the chief second crops. Irrigation is of average extent. The all-round rent-rate is R. 0-14-9.

Kirnāpur is a small brown soil group. The tract is rather liable to famine. Urad is the chief double crop. Irrigation is below the average in extent and quality; the average rent-rate is R 1-2-1, the absence of jungly villages tending to make it higher than in Lānji, but similar villages really pay much the same in both groups.

Bijāgarh.—Here kodon, kutkī and tobacco are important, as well as rice, which is in many places sown by *lehī*; this makes it specially liable to damage if the rain holds off after sowing. The average rent-rate is R. 0-9-3 an acre; owing to the tobacco cultivation, the average is high for a jungly tract. These tobacco villages are confined to the Bālāghāt tahsīl. The tract is at present so depopulated and the inhabitants rely so largely for their subsistence on cattle breeding and the sale of forest products that bad seasons do not affect them much. But this will cease to be the case if the tract becomes more thickly inhabited, as it was before the losses sustained in the famine of 1897.

There are the following Station-houses in the Bālāghat tahsīl:—Bālāghāt, with an outpost at Hattā, and a road post at Rajegaon; Lānji, with outposts at Kirnā-

pur and Bahelā; and Wārāseonī with outposts at Katangī and Lālbarrā.

There are dispensaries at Bālāghāt, Wārāseonī, Katangī and Lānji. There is a middle school at Bālāghāt, and vernacular middle schools at Hattā, Wārāseonī and Lālbarrā; and there are 41 primary schools. There are two girls' schools, one at Bālāghāt and one at Wārāseonī.

There are 11 branch post offices in the tahsīl, and a sub-office at Bālāghāt. There is also a telegraph office at Bālāghāt.

There are railway stations at Bālāghāt and Samnāpur, and another at Hattā Road is under construction.

A dâk bungalow and circuit house exist at Bālāghāt, and inspection bungalows at Wārāseonī, Katangī, Lālbarrā, Kanjai, Pāldongrī, Pīpartolā (or Tikāri), Samnāpur, and Hirrī. Made roads lead from Bālāghāt to Wārāseonī (10 miles), and Katangī (29 miles); to Lālbarrā (13 miles), and to the border of the District on the way to Seoni (26 miles); from Katangī to Seoni-Chappāra and Tumsar, from Wārāseonī to Rampaili and to Lālbarrā; from Bālāghāt to Laugur (17 miles) on the way to Baihar (42 miles); Bālāghāt to Rajegaon (15 miles), to Kirnāpur (6 miles further), and to Lanji (18 miles further still); Lālbarrā to Samnāpur (6 miles); Lānji to Amgaon (16 miles).

The total area of the tahsīl included in holdings in 1904-05 was 368,583 acres. Of these, 272,946 were in the *khālsa* and 95,637 were in zamīndāris. Of this area, 64,338 acres were held as *sīr* and 22,224 acres as *khudkāsht*; 8823 acres were held by *mālik-makbūzas* on a revenue of Rs. 8330. This class are not numerous save in a few villages, of which Lanji is the most important. There are no revenue-free plot-holders; 34,181 acres were held by absolute occupancy tenants on a rental of Rs. 38,280, and 96,747 acres by occupancy tenants on a rental of Rs. 1,02,149. Ordinary tenants held 139,978 acres on a rental of Rs. 1,52,061. There were 1887 acres held on privileged tenure by permission of the proprie-

tors; and 406 acres held as service land. The small area of service land in this District is noticeable.

The mālguzāri land revenue demand in 1904-05 was Rs 1,68,334, the zamīndāri *takoli* Rs. 45,763, and settlement cesses Rs. 13,023. The total village area was 726,531 acres. The area occupied for cultivation was 369,006 acres and the area under crop 295,543. The chief *kharīf* crops were, transplanted rice 120,300 acres; broadcast rice 72,268 acres; and lesser millets 25,503 acres: while among the *rabi* crops, urad and mūng with 45,570 acres, wheat with 14,734 acres, and gram with 17,469 acres, are important. The area irrigated was 43,990 acres.

**Balaghat Town.**—This is the District headquarters. It consists of the two villages of Būrha and Būrhi, of which the area, land revenue and population are given below :—

| Village | Population. | | Area. | Land revenue. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1901. | 1891 | | |
| Būrha ... | 5398 | 4453 | 1412 | 1170 |
| Būrhi ... | 825 | 685 | 606 | 305 |

The mālguzār of Būrha is a Muhammadan, and of Būrhi a Kalār. The area within municipal limits is 829·47 acres of which 393·77 are Government *nazūl*. There is also a considerable area of *nazūl* forest outside municipal limits, under the direct management of the Deputy Commissioner. The railway station is situated about a mile to the east of the town. The two roads from Gondia and Baihar cross the railway and converge on the main bazar or Guzrī Chauk. The Sadar distillery is situated just where the Baihar road crosses the line. A *ganj* or grain market has been started on the road to the

railway station. Proceeding along the road from the station, the Devī tank with its temple is passed on the right; round this lie the Marāri *mohalla* to the north with the Kumhār and Ghasia *mohallas* towards the west and south-west. The weekly bazar used to be held near this tank but is now held at the *ganj*. Further westwards along the road is the Guzrī Chauk, which is surrounded by shops; to the north of it are the middle school, Station-house and *masjid*. The more respectable quarters of the town lie round this *chauk* and to the west of it. Just on the outskirts of the town to the west are the Morris library and town hall, the post office, the pound, veterinary dispensary, and civil dispensary and a little further west the jail, the public offices and tahsīli. A church has also been erected here by the Balāghāt Mission.

The civil station lies beyond these, on the extreme west of the ridge on which the town is situated. The bungalows of the officials are, all save one, the property of Government; they, as well as the dâk bungalow and circuit house, lie between the town and the *nazūl* forest. The village of Būrhi is on the road to Lalbarrā, to the north of the civil station, and near to it are the police lines. To the south of the civil station is the Motī tank, with the Government gardens closely adjoining it. This tank was built by Colonel Bloomfield, and with the trees and *kattang* bamboos that fringe its banks and a view of the high Sātpurā hills in the distance, is the most picturesque feature of the headquarters station. A branch office of the Lānji *kamaishdār* was for some time situated at Būrha; which, when the District was founded, was chosen as the headquarters. Its name was gradually dropped in favour of Bālāghāt, the name of the District, and the usage was officially sanctioned in 1895: though the name is eminently unsuited to a place lying just at the foot of the hills. The population of the Municipality has steadily risen from 4136 in 1881 to 5138 in 1891, and 6223 in 1901. The next census should see an even larger increase. The number of males was 3057

and of females 3166 at the last census. The number of literates was 717.

**Bamhangaon Zamindari.**—This zamīndāri consists of 4 villages, lying near Kirnāpur, and is the property of a Rājput family, represented by a lady named Kesar Bai living at Hirrī. The area of the zamīndāri is 5333 acres.

**Banjar River.**—The Banjar rises in the Gandai zamīndāri and flows at first between banks studded with willows (*salix tetrasperma*) and *jāmun* trees through the black soil plains of the Saletekrī and Gandai zamīndāris. Lower down it forms the boundary of the Bālāghāt District and of the Kawardha Feudatory State Flowing northwards it forces its way over the curiously coloured rocks of the Kharrādhār barrier, and thence, fringed with a succession of *sāl* groves, it flows westward in a winding course till it meets the Jamunia near Bhīmlāt. Its course from this point is mostly north, through almost uninterrupted *sal* forests, till it leaves the District at Nauna Its length in the District is 72 miles.

**Bargaon Zamindari.**—This tiny zamīndāri consists of one village, area 1098 acres, belonging to a wealthy Rājput moneylender, Ganpat Singh of Māte.

**Bhadra Zamindari.**—A zamīndāri in the extreme south-east of the District, owned by a Muhammadan family. The area is 83,222 acres and it contains 78 villages. The east of the tract consists of lofty hills and forests, while to the west is a level plain of brown soil sloping down to the Bāgh. The forest income, especially from lac, is considerable. The chief crop is transplanted rice, followed by various second crops Its chief villages are Manerī, Kāranja and Bahelā. The latter village is the residence of the zamīndār ; the two former are owned by Marāthā Brāhman inferior proprietors who are connected with each other by marriage. An important bazar is held at Kulpā. The Lānjī-Amgaon road traverses the zamīndāri from north to south.

**Bhaisanghat.**—A range of hills running west-north-west from the Kawardhā State, along the north of the Banjar valley, to where that river leaves the District. The Raigarh plateau and part of the Mandlā District lie above the hills. The southern ascent is much higher and steeper than the northern. The rock is mostly gneiss and laterite with trap over-liers. Bauxite occurs in places as well as iron and probably manganese ore. The forest at the foot of, and for some way up, the hills, consists of valuable *sāl*. Towards the tops, bamboos and mixed species predominate. The principal ghāt is the Bhaisānghāt from Muki to Sijhorā; this is partly aligned and graded and allows cart traffic to pass freely. It is kept up by the Forest Department for the Toplā sleeper traffic Other passes are the Lapti or Gārāghāt; the Nakṭī pass leading to Kanā Keslī in Mandlā; and a new road to the east of the range now under construction by the Forest Department leading to Sukri in Toplā.

**Bhanpur Zamindari.**—This zamīndāri lies mostly in the valleys of the Kis, upper Son and Deo. Some few villages are in the plain of the Deo valley where it issues from the hills, but most of them lie above the ghāts, in a tangled mass of hill and jungle, that, with the Kīnhi zamīndāri, constitutes the wildest part of the District. The forests, though very extensive, are of little value The zamīndāri extends over 208 square miles and contains 55 villages. The cultivation is mostly of the lesser millets, and *sarson*, with a little rice All but one village has been lost to the possession of the Gond family who once owned it and has now passed into the hands of various moneylenders. The tract contains a *shikmī* zamīndāri of six villages lying near Bhanpur; this has also mostly passed out of the hands of its original Gond proprietors and is now owned by moneylenders Transferees only acquire mālguzāri rights in these areas. There are no villages of any particular importance save Bitli and Sonpurī, and no made roads. The Bhānpur ghāt leading from Bhānpur village to the uplands has been aligned.

**Bhanpur Village.**—An utterly insignificant village, on the banks of the Deo, close to where it issues from the Sātpurā hills. It gives its name to the zamīndari of Bhānpur and a few members of the zamīndāri family still live there.

**Bhimlat Pargana.**—This tract lies in the upper Banjar valley to the east of Baihar. It consists mostly of yellow soil, suitable for rice, with a little brown soil capable of double cropping in the Jamunia valley. The chief bazar is held at Mohgaon. As the area is not precisely defined the number of villages and acreage cannot be given

**Bhimlat Village.**—A village in Baihar on the bank of the Jamunia river near where it joins the Banjar. There is a stone pillar here, sacred to the god Bhīmsen, which gives its name to the village The pargana of Bhīmlāt is called after the village, which is now, however, quite unimportant.

**Bhondwa**—A good-sized village about 2 miles from Lāmta on the Baihar-Lamta road, owned by Gond under-proprietors of the Mau estate; its area is 1286 acres and its population 382 persons. It contains a fine large tank.

**Birsa.**—A ryotwāri village 18 miles east of Baihar. Its area is 1151 acres and its population 400 persons, among whom Ponwārs predominate. It contains a good tank, and a police post.

**Bisoni.**—A large and fertile village close to Lānji. Its area is 1141 acres and its population 1250; it has a large tank and is celebrated for its sugarcane. Its proprietors are a family of poor Musalmāns and the cultivators are principally Lodhīs.

**Budbuda.**—A large village on the Wārāseonī-Katangī road. Its area is 3964 acres and its population 1832; it contains a school and post office. It is a productive village, the rice area being protected by a number of tanks; and a good deal of inferior sugarcane is grown along the Dhokria nullah. Its proprietors are well-to-do Ponwārs. A manganese deposit exists here.

**Burha.**—This is the original name of Bālāghāt, by which it was known before 1895.

**Charegaon.**—A railway station on the Sātpurā line, just north of the Nahāra river. The village is 1984 acres in area and its population is 597. It contains a timber depôt, a school and post office.

**Chhindlai.**—An important ford and ferry on the Waingangā between Charegaon and Jām. Much of the produce of Mau and of the Baihar uplands find its way by this route to the market of Barghāt in the Seonī District.

**Deo River.**—The Deo river rises in the Chauria zamīndari, and for some distance flows directly north. In the Kīnhi zamīndāri it turns west, and flows to meet the Kis river, which rises in Tīpāgarh and drains the upper Bhānpur zamīndāri. The principal falls on these rivers occur at Bitli and Maldhar; after their junction, the united stream flows through a ravine of tremendous depth over a succession of falls into the open plain at Bhānpur, where its valley, lying between steep hills and studded with bamboos and forest trees, is extremely picturesque. Flowing past rich *kachhār* land, it separates the Kirnāpur and Hattā zamīndāris and runs into the Bāgh. During the latter part of its course, its bed is very wide and sandy, and presents a great breadth of alluvial soil, which is planted with sugarcane and garden crops. Its length in the District is 45 miles.

**Dhansua Pargana.**—This tract lies between the Waingangā and the hills, to the north of Bālāghat town. The settlement group of this name contains 64 villages, comprised in an area of 62,976 acres. Save in the extreme north and east, where the surface is forest-clad and undulating, the soil is level and black, and grows broadcast rice followed chiefly by urad.

Bālāghāt is the chief town, lying on the railway which traverses the group from north to south. The pargana takes its name from the village of Dhansuā, and was once held in tālukdāri right by a Musalmān family, who lost it some time

between 1830 and 1854. Roads run through the group from Samnāpur to Lālbarrā, and from Bālāghāt to Gondia, Wārāseonī and Lālbarrā. The manganese mines of Bharwelī lie 3 miles from Bālāghāt town.

**Dhansua Village.**—A large village of 2116 acres, and a population of 560 persons, situated just off the Bālāghāt-Baihar road some 6 miles north-east of Bālāghāt town. It gives its name to a pargana. There is a school here and a small stone temple

**Dhipur.**—A small village some 12 miles north-west of Baihar. It contains an interesting temple of considerable antiquity.

**Gudma.**—A village on the 26th mile of the Bālāghāt-Baihar road; its area is 1043 acres and its population 335. It is held by a *thekedār* under the proprietors of the Mau estate. There are important manganese mines here and in the adjoining villages of Ukwā and Samnāpur. A school and a post office are situated here.

**Hatta Zamindar.**—This large and wealthy zamīndār lies south of Bālāghāt town. It is nearly all in the open plain, except 3 or 4 villages which lie above the ghāt. The west of the tract is a fine level area of black soil; the rest contains mostly yellow soil The black soil tract grows broadcast rice, mostly followed by urad and linseed, while the main crop of the yellow soil tract is transplanted rice. There are 75 villages in the zamīndāri, the area of which is 86,816 acres. It is traversed by the Gondia-Bālāghāt road and the Satpurā railway The only town is Hattā, the residence of the zamīndār, and a somewhat reduced trading resort.

**Hatta Village.**—A large village some 12 miles south-east of Bālāghāt It is the headquarters of the zamīndār of Hattā. The village stands on a laterite ridge, and is well drained and surrounded by several tanks. Its population in 1901 was 2409, of whom 156 were literate. The population at the previous census was 2750 The village occupies the site of an old Gond fort but the present fort was

founded and greatly enlarged by Chimnā Patel, zamīndār of Kāmtha: and after his deposition it came into the possession of the Lodhi family of Kāmtha, of which the present zamīndār is a descendant. The zamīndār's house, which is a large building with several courtyards, is on the site of the old fort, the remaining walls of which form its outer enclosure. It contains a fine *baolī*; the local proverb mentions *Hattā ki baolī aur Lingā ki Havelī* as the two buildings best worth seeing in the District. The area of the village of Hattā is 2718 41 acres: of which ·14 is *nazūl*. The *kāmil jamā* of the village is Rs. 1500. There is a police outpost, a school built by the zamīndār, a pound, a post office and an excise outstill. A good many traders live here, and there is some local business in grain, etc. A road is shortly to be constructed joining Hattā to the Hattā Road station. There is a weekly bazar of some importance and a small daily bazar or *guzrī*. The village contains 13 tanks, of which the *Barā talao* is the largest.

**Hirri.**—This is the headquarters of the Bāmhangaon zamīndāri. Its area is 2312 acres and its population in 1901 and 1891 was 418 and 524 respectively. Its *kāmil jamā* is Rs 400 The zamīndārin, a Rājput, lives here. The largest cattle bazar in the District is held here on Tuesdays; the cattle are registered and the fees taken by the zamīndārin. The village is situated on the Son river and is traversed by the Lānji-Kirnāpur road. An inspection bungalow has been built here The jungle of this village contains a herd of wild cattle.

**Jam.**—A fine large village with an area of 2288 acres and a population of 1218 persons in north Karolā. It is held in mālguzāri right by the zamīndār of Hattā. It has several tanks and a school The cultivators are mostly Kalārs, Lodhīs and Marārs.

**Kaidi.**—A large village, celebrated for its *chinnur* rice, six miles west of Bālāghāt on the Wārāseonī road. Its area is 2,873 acres and its population 1,413 persons, living in

several hamlets. It has a fine tank and a school. Its mālguzār is a Lodhī, related to the Hattā and Kāmtha zamīndārs. The tenants are mostly Lodhīs.

**Kandri Kalan.**—A large village in the south of the Kirnāpur zamīndāri, on the Bāgh river. Its area is 2678 acres and its population 1125 persons. It has a school. It is a part of the Kirnāpur zamīndāri.

**Kanjai.**—The ghāt leading from the Bālāghāt to the Seonī District.

**Kanki.**—A large village, 2300 acres in area and with a population of 1011, on the right bank of the Waingangā, about 2 miles from Bālāghāt, on the Lālbarrā road. There is a school here. The mālguzār is a Marāthā Brāhman, and the tenants Gonds, Ponwārs and Lodhīs.

**Karanja.**—A large and troublesome village in the south of the Bahelā zamīndāri, owned by a Marāthā Brāhman who holds from the zamīndār of Bahelā. It is inhabited by a mixed population, containing a good many weavers and Beldārs. There is an outcrop of granite rock here The village is close to the Lanji-Amgaon road ; its area is 2423 acres and its population 1535. It has a school and post office.

**Karola Pargana.**—The name of the pargana which lies between the right bank of the Waingangā and the Sonewāni hills, and comprises the two settlement groups of North and South Karolā, with an area of over 184,814 acres contained in 149 villages. Its principal market towns are Lālbarrā and Warāseonī. The north of the area is a plain of rich black soil in which broadcast rice and double cropping prevails, while a certain amount of wheat is grown. In the south the soil is lighter and the villages are more undulating but grow the finest rice in the District. The western edge of the tract below the hills contains a number of jungly villages.

**Katangi Pargana.**—The extreme west of the District is known as the Katangī pargana. It contains 91 villages, and covers an area of 90,631 acres. Its prevailing soil is

brown, which is often embanked for wheat growing; the principal crop is rice, followed by *lakhorī* and linseed as a second crop. Along the Chunai river a good deal of sugar-cane of an inferior type is grown. Katangī is the only important market town. Extensive manganese deposits exist in the south-west part of the pargana, which is traversed by three made roads, leading from Katangī to Seonī, Tumsar and Bālāghāt. The principal river of the tract is the Chunai.

**Katangī Village.**—This small bazar town is really an agglomeration of 2 villages; of which the names and populations are given below.—

| Name of village. | | Population. | | Area in acres. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1901. | 1891. | |
| Katangī | ... | 755 | 361 | 66 |
| Thāna | ... | 810 | 1,048 | 658 |
| Total | ... | 1,565 | 1,409 | 724 |

The village consists of a central square, which occupies the site of an old fort and is surrounded by a few good houses with two or three scattered hamlets. It has two good-sized tanks adjoining it. The village of Katangī is entirely *nazūl*. The land revenue of Thāna is Rs. 635, and its mālguzār is a Ponwār. A school, post office, excise outstill, dispensary, and police outpost are situated here. The old tahsīl office has been turned into a *sarai*. It is of a peculiar type and was evidently designed to be capable of defence.

An important bazar is held here, quite out of proportion to the size of the place, which furnishes a convenient exchange between the wheat and sugarcane cultivators who live above the ghāts, the cotton, juār and wheat growers of Rāmtek, and the local growers of rice. It is under contemplation to build a broad-gauge railway from here to Tumsar to serve the manganese concessions in the neighbourhood. The cattle bazar is somewhat important, and the Rāmtek cultivators come here in considerable numbers in December and January to buy rice, of which

200 or 300 cartloads are sometimes taken away at a time. Brass work from Wārāseonī is sold, and weavers from neighbouring villages and from Wārāseonī bring their cloths for sale. *Gur* from the Seonī District is also brought in. There are considerable exports of rice, both up the ghāts to Bārghāt in Seonī and to the rail at Tumsar. The town was administered by a municipality up to 1894, since when it has been brought under the Village Sanitation Act. The income that could be raised under the old Act proving inadequate, advantage was taken of the passing of the recent Act to widen the basis of taxation, with satisfactory results; it is hoped that an annual revenue of not less than Rs. 1,500 will be available for the improvement of the bazar site and of the sanitation of the village. This was the headquarters of the Katangī tahsīl of the Seonī District, prior to its transfer to Bālāghat in the year 1873.

**Kinhi Zamindari.**—This zamīndāri lies partly above the hills, partly just below them, to the south-east of the Bhānpur zamīndāri. It is situated in the upper valleys of the Deo and Son. The portion above the ghāts is exceedingly wild and hilly, and is mostly inhabited by Gonds and Baigās who practise *bewar* cultivation. The part below the ghāts is interspersed with hills and forests, but contains good brown and yellow soil. The area of the zamīndāri is 101,490 acres and it contains 62 villages. Above the ghāts the principal crop is kodon-kutkī. Below the hills, a good deal of transplanted rice is grown. The forests are not particularly valuable, though they contain a little good *sāl* in one part. The family who own the estate have partitioned it into three shares. They are Golars by caste, and were once in charge of the private herds of the Nāgpur Rājā. Kīnhi is the only village of any note in the zamīndāri: it is situated below the ghāt, and is the residence of the various members of the zamīndāri family.

**Kinhi Village.**—The headquarters of the Kīnhi zamīndāri, just below the Sātpurā hills, some 7 miles east of

Kirnāpur. Its area is 1556 acres and its population 569 There is a school here.

**Kharja.**—A ryotwāri village in Raigarh; area 1818 acres, population 238. The village contains several hamlets. A police post is situated here.

**Kirnapur Zamindari.**—This zamīndāri lies in two blocks, north and south of the Son river. It contains 25 villages, of which only 23 now belong to the zamīndār. It is a brown soil area, lying in the open plain and is highly fertile, resembling the northern portion of the Lānji pargana The *zamīndāri* is held by Tikārām Bāpu, under the Court of Wards; he is a Kunbi by caste, and a descendant of Chimnā Patel zamīndār of Kamtha; a detailed account of the family history is given in Chapter III of this volume. The area of the tract is 26,327 acres, and its chief village is Kirnāpur, from which made roads traverse the group to Rajegaon and Lānji.

**Kirnapur Village**—This is the principal village of the Kirnāpur *zamīndāri*. It lies in the *doāb* of the Son and Deo rivers, and is 21 miles from Bālāghāt by road *viâ* Rajegaon. Made roads lead to Lānji and Rajegaon and about two miles of a direct road to Bālāghat *viâ* Hatta have been constructed. The area of the village is 1537 acres, and its population in 1901 and 1891 was 1508 and 1691 respectively. Of its inhabitants 124 are literate. It is the headquarters of a Revenue Inspector, and contains an out-still, *sarai*, school, police outpost and post office. The zamindār's house is a large structure, now much decayed, but still containing a fine carved verandah. There is a very large tank that commands a considerable area of cultivated land. The town was a fairly important trading centre before the railway came to Gondia: but, owing to goods being now taken direct to Gondia or Bālāghāt, instead of being collected at outlying villages like Kirnāpur or Hattā and thence despatched to Kamptee, its importance has declined. It still contains a few weavers and traders.

**Kochewara.**—A large village in the Mau pargana, some 3 miles west of Lāmta. Its area is 1481 acres and its population 392. It is the residential village of the proprietors of the Mau estate, who are Marāthā Kunbīs by caste.

**Koste.**—A large village, 1845 acres in area, population 964, about 2 miles south-east of Wārāseonī. It is celebrated for its *chinnur* rice. The mālguzār and most of the tenants are Ponwārs.

**Kulpa.**—An important bazar village in the south of the Bhādra zamīndāri, on the river Bāgh. Its area is 2184 acres and its population is 1127.

**Lalbarra.**—An important bazar and trading centre situated on the Bālāghāt-Seonī road, at a distance of 14 miles from the District head-quarters. There is another made road leading due south to Wārāseonī and one to Samnāpur station across the Waingangā. The Sarāthi nullah passes close to the town. The name of Lālbarrā may be searched for in vain in the District list of villages. It is applied to a collection of houses and a bazar site situated between the villages of Amolī, Pāndarwāni and Mānpur. The area, land revenue and population of these villages are given below :—

| Village | Population. | | Area. | Land revenue. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1901. | 1891. | | |
| Mānpur... ... | ... | 391 | 797 | 445 |
| Pāndarwāni ... | 1466 | 2034 | 1655 | 1120 |
| Amoli .. ... | 1053 | 1223 | 653 | 560 |
| Total . | 2519 | 3648 | 3105 | 2125 |

Mānpur is owned by a Mahar, Amoli by a Kalār and Pāndarwāni by a Mahar. This bazar, like that of Katangī, owes its trade to the exchange of products between the

dwellers in the tracts above and below the ghāts. There are a number of traders here who purchase grain for despatch to Rāmpaili and Tumsar, or to Barghāt. A good many weavers live in or near the village, and they, as well as the weavers and brass workers of Warāseonī, take advantage of the bazar to tempt agriculturists to purchase. Lālbarra used at one time to export direct to Kamptee which is 93 miles distant by road, but the railway has gradually put an end to this trade. Although there is a made road leading from here to Samnāpur station on the Sātpurā line, it is not much used as yet. The cattle bazar, which is held on Thursdays, is one of the largest in the District and is frequented by dealers from Saugor, Bhandāra, Seonī, and Chhindwāra. A municipality used to exist here till it was abolished in 1902. Its income was almost entirely derived from bazar dues and cattle registration fees: these are now collected by the District Council, which in return is supposed to clean and maintain the bazar site. There is a vernacular middle school, an outpost, pound, bazar, office, post office, and inspection bungalow here.

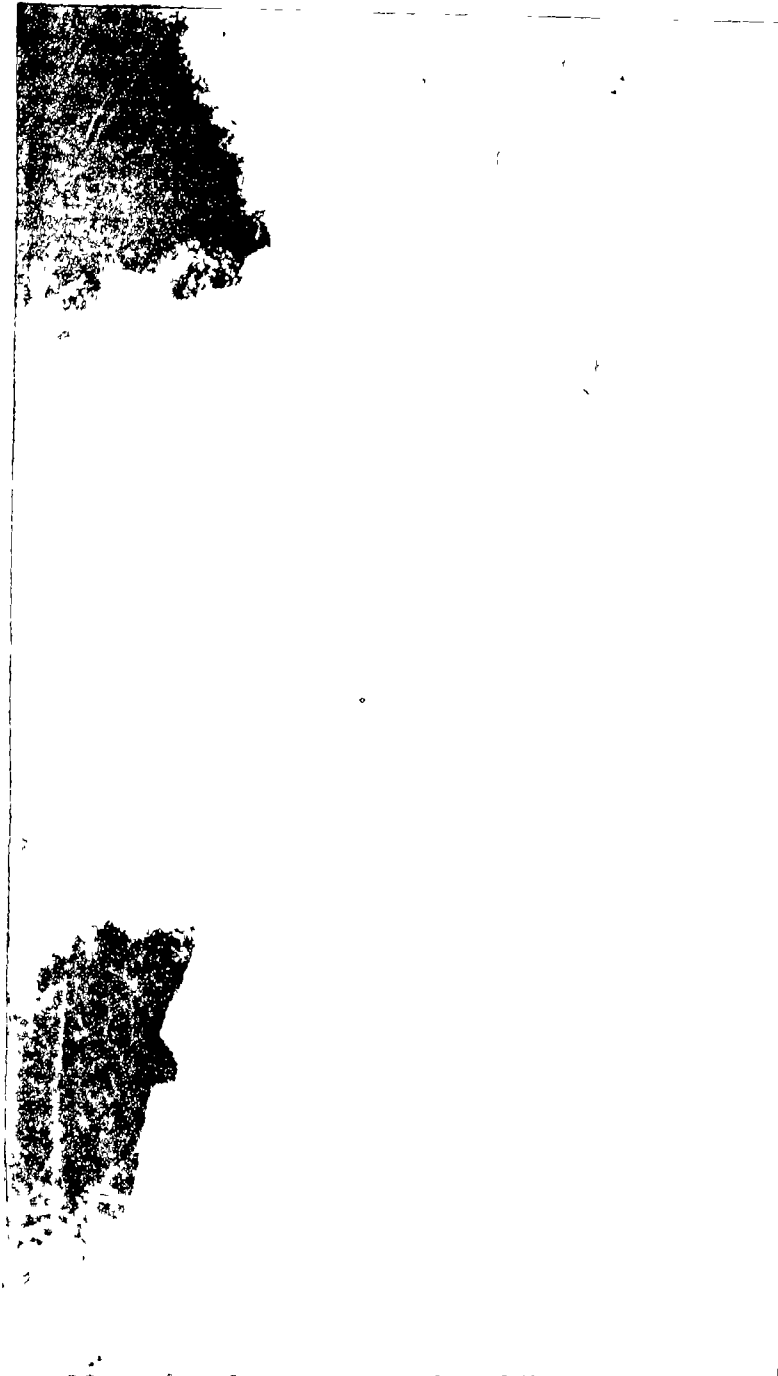
**Lamta.**—A good-sized village and railway station in the Mau pargana and on the Sātpurā line. It belongs to the Mau estate. Its area is 1670 acres and its population 411. The Lāmta-Baihar road starts from this village. Most of the timber and minor forest produce of Baihar is brought here for export; and the timber depôt contains large quantities of sleepers, bamboos, firewood and *harrā* There is a school, *sarai*, post office, inspection bungalow, and forest bungalow. A *gunj* has been projected here.

**Lanji Pargana.**– This pargana is a scattered one, being broken up by the various zamīndāris. Some of its 86 villages lie round Lanji village in the plain between the Son and the Bāgh; others near the Kirnāpur zamīndāri. The area of the group is 74,779 acres A few villages lying east of Lānji village are jungly; but most of the group is very rich and well cultivated. The prevailing soils are brown and black;

and the chief staple is rice, followed by a second crop of *lakhori* and urad. Some excellent sugarcane is grown near Lānji village. The principal villages of the tract are Mohjhirī, Bisonī and Lānji : and it is traversed by a made road from Lānji to Kirnāpur

**Lanji Village**.—An old and picturesque village lying not far from the Son river at the junction of the Amgaon and Kirnāpur roads. It is 38 miles from the District headquarters and 16 from Amgaon, the nearest railway station. The village contains 2617 acres, of which 223 acres, comprising the old fort site, and some land and tanks around it are *nazūl*. The village is divided into 4 mahāls, of which one is held solely by *malik-makbuzas*, and pays Rs. 1284 as land revenue; the mālguzārs are Barais. The population in 1901 was 2292, including 107 literates; in 1891 it was 2207. There is a school with a good garden, a Station-house, a forest post, an excise outstill, a post office and a dispensary. The village contains a large number of tanks, and, whether owing to these or to the neighbourhood of the hills and river, the subsoil water level is very near the surface; while this admirably adapts the village for sugarcane and garden cultivation, it makes it very unhealthy. There are *pān barejās*-groves of mangoes and other fruit trees, and sugarcane is extensively cultivated; a recent analysis proved its sugar-yielding qualities to be second to none in India.

This is the only place in the District that can pretend to any historical interest. A stone inscription from Ratanpur in the Bilāspur District, dated 1114 A. D., mentions the rulers of Lānji as among the tributaries of the Ratanpur Rājā. There is also a legendary and probably imaginary connection between Lānji and the Rājās of Sārangarh. The village was the seat of a Rājput line of rulers in ancient days which was either conquered by or absorbed in the Mandlā Gond dynasty. The fort was built by the Gonds, according to local tradition, about a thousand years ago. This building, of which but few remains are left, is surrounded by a moat and overgrown

Photo Etching | Roorkee College.

Dharma Chakra or Buddhist wheel of the Law in the Lanji fort wall.

with trees. It formed the seat in more recent times of the Marāthā *kamaishdār*, and was held in the interest of Chimnā Patel at the time of his rebellion in 1819, but did not offer a very effective resistance to the British forces. Inside the fort is a temple of Mahamai or Devī, the deity who under the title of Lanjkai Devī has given her name to the village. The village of Tedwā is held on *maktā* tenure for the maintenance of this temple. There is a very old temple of Koteshwar Mahadeo in the jungle about a mile from the village. It is built in the same style as the Baihar temples, of large blocks, without mortar; and is visited by pilgrims on the Shivrātri. There is also a temple of Shri Rāmchandra Swāmi, for the maintenance of which two villages in the Bhadra zamīndāri are given in *muāfi* by its Musalmān proprietor. Of the numerous tanks 13 are large and have various stories attaching to them, but only one is really worthy of note, *viz.*, the Rājā Rānī talao, which is said to have been built by the Gond Rājās Gangji and Somjī, the founders of the fort; it has two stone ghāts, for the Rājā and Rānī to bathe from.

Two of the tanks are said to have been built by the Kohlis, a famous tank-building caste of Chānda and Bhandāra. They have, however, quite disappeared from the neighbourhood of Lānji.

**Lendejhiri**.—A moderate-sized village about 3 miles west of Bālāghāt. It grows the best *chinnur* rice in the District.

**Linga**.—A very rich black soil village, about 5 miles south-east of Bālāghāt, with an area of 1541 acres and a population of 1755. It has a miscellaneous population, including some weavers, and contains a school and post office. It grows good wheat and gram and has some garden cultivation along the Ghisarī, but rice is the principal crop. The mālguzārs are well-to-do Kunbīs, owning other villages and related to the zamīndārs of Kirnapur and Amgaon. Their house contains some fine carved pillars and other wood work. Both a daily and weekly bazar are held here.

**Manegaon.**—A ryotwāri village about 24 miles east of Baihar, in the Bhīmlāt tract. Its area is 1279 acres and its population 416. There is a school and post office here. The weekly bazar is becoming important.

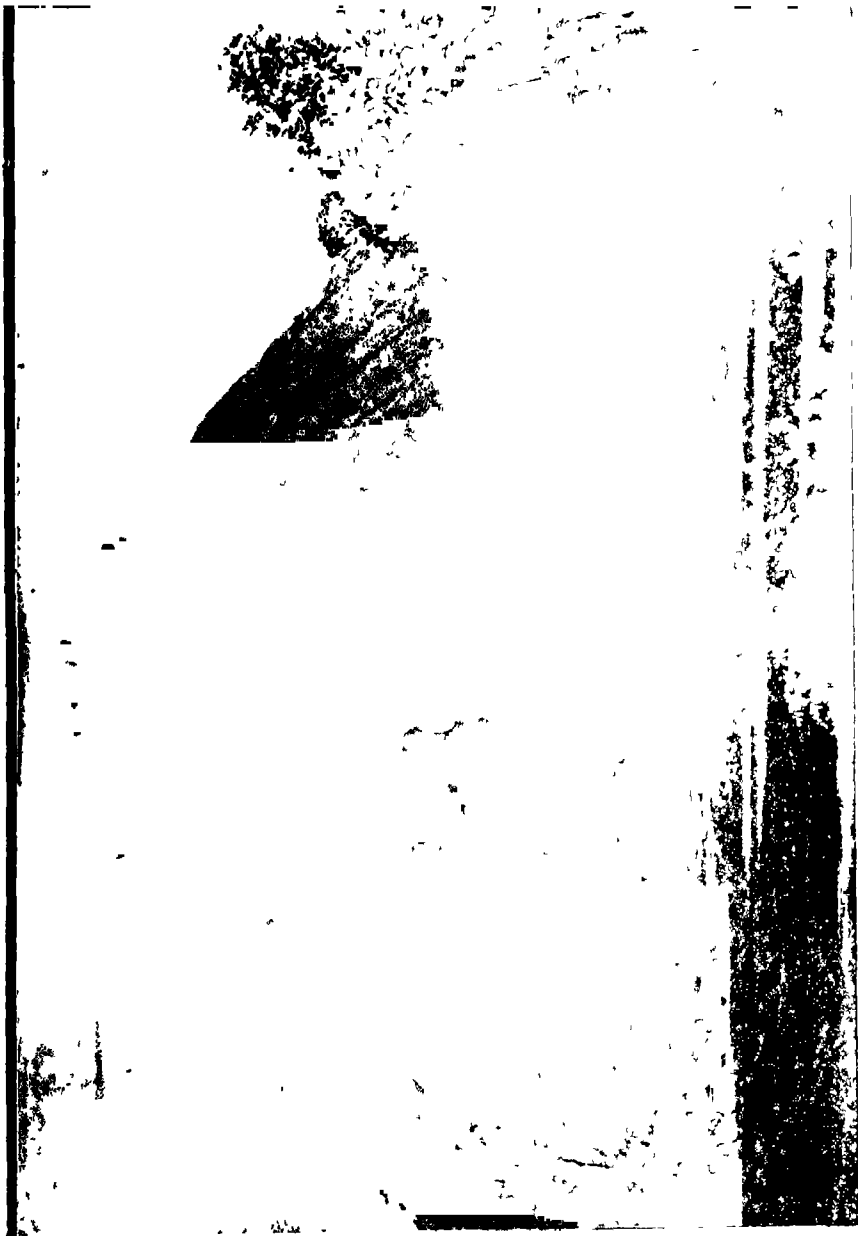
**Maneri.**—A large village in the Bhādra zamīndari, and owned by a Marāthā Brāhman inferior proprietor, holding from the Bhādra zamīndār. Its area is 1886 acres, and its population 843. It contains a school and a grant-in-aid tank.

**Mau Pargana.**—The Mau Pargana is a narrow strip lying between the upper Waingangā and the Sātpurā hills. It contains 66 mālguzāri villages, besides about 10 ryotwāri villages, and its area is upwards of 62,288 acres. The soil in the extreme north and south is black, but over the rest of the tract it is yellow ; rice followed by *rabi* is the prevailing crop. The tract is generally level, but is studded with numerous isolated hills. It is traversed from end to end by the railway.

The principal village is Lāmta, which is a railway station and the terminus of the Baihar-Lāmta road. There is an important bazar at Mau. The tract is mostly owned by Saraswati Bai, a Marāthā Kunbī lady, resident at Kochewāra.

**Mehdiwara.**—A village just south of Wārāseonī, on the Chunai river, with an area of 1376 acres and a population of 1858 persons. It is divided into two mahāls, owned by a Baniā and a Musalmān. There are numerous weavers here ; and the miscellaneous population of tenants and artisans have a bad reputation for disorderly conduct.

**Moria.**--A malguzāri village about 4 miles south-east of Lāmta. The largest tank in the District exists here, having been built by the father of the present patel A very fine kind of rice called Haidarābādi is grown in this village.

**Mohgaon (Birsa).**—A mālguzāri village owned by Ponwārs about 11 miles east of Baihar. Its area is 2083 acres and its population 297. It has a school and post office, and the largest cattle bazar in the Baihar tahsil is held here. Cattle registration dues are collected and credited to a bazar fund.

**Mohgaon (Jam).**—This is a fair-sized black soil village near Jām. It contains a tank built by the Irrigation Department in the year 1905 and is owned by Ponwārs.

**Mohgaon (Jarha).**—This village is situated on the Chunai river in the south of the Katangī pargana. Its area is 2499 acres and its population 1383 persons. It contains a grant-in-aid tank and its principal crops are rice and sugarcane. There is a school and a temple here. The mālguzārs are Kalārs.

**Mohjhiri.**—A large village with a school and post office in the north part of the Lāuji pargana. Its area is 2026 acres and its population 1258. The mālguzāi is a Kunbī.

**Nagpura.**—A village with an area of 1363 acres, population 1066, in north Karolā, just below the hills. It contains a school and a fine grant-in-aid tank. The mālguzārs are a respectable family of Gosains.

**Narsingha.**—A village about 1 mile west of Lāmta station in the Mau pargana. It contains a singular dome-shaped mass of rock about 200 feet high, of which the surface is absolutely smooth on two sides. On the top is a temple.

**Nagarwara.**—A railway station on the Satpurā line, which takes its name from a neighbouring village in the Mau pargana. It is of little importance, only a small quantity of goods from the Mau bazar or from the Ahmadpur ghāt finding its way here.

**Newargaon.**—A village on the Wārāseonī-Lalbarrā road, area 1834 acres, population 784. It contains a school, several tanks and a few old tombs. The village is owned by Musalmāns, descendants of a family who once held a large tract in south Karolā in Marāthā times.

**Nikkum.**—A village in Bhīmlāt near the Jamunia river; here is a station of the Bālāghāt Christian Mission, with a school and farm.

**Nilji.**—A large village north-west of Wāraseoni, in south Karolā, area 2548 acres, and population 1228 persons. It is owned by a Musalmān lady. There is a school here.

**Paraswara Pargana.**—This pargana lies on the Baihar plateau, between the Tīpāgarh hills and the edge of the ghāts. It is mostly open and well cultivated. Many of the villages are owned by the Kochewāra family of Marāthā Kunbīs. It contains some 74 villages, but, as the tract now known as Paraswāra contains many ryotwāri villages that formed part of the forest in the days when parganas were treated as definite revenue areas, the exact area cannot be stated. It is traversed by the Baihar-Lamta road.

**Paraswara Village**.—A village on the 13th mile of the Lāmta-Baihar road, belonging to Mahār under-proprietors who hold from the Mau proprietors. The village gives its name to the Paraswāra pargana and the mālguzārs are called Gomāshtas from their position as pargana accountants under the Gond kings of Mandlā. There are a school, post office, pound, and Station-house here; also a Public Works inspection bungalow. The area of the village is 1294 acres and its population 582.

**Patadeh.**—A small village in the north of Mau. The railway station of Pādriganj is situated close to it; there is a post office at the railway station.

**Pola.**—A large jungly village in the north of the Bhānpur zamindāri, area 5056 acres, population 202. This is the only village of the old zamīndāri now held in zamīndāri right, and the present representative of the zamīndāri family lives here.

**Raigarh Pargana.**—This tract lies above the Bhaisānghāt in the extreme north of the District. The west of it is an open rolling down, cut up by numerous streams and partly cultivated. The east consists of the Toplā and Raigarh forests. The cultivation is poor and consists mainly of the lesser millets with a little rice, wheat and gram. There are no villages of any note. The Bilāspur-Mandlā road traverses the northern boundary of the tract.

**Rajegaon.**—A small village in the Hattā zamīndāri on the Bāgh river, where it crosses the Bālāghāt-Gondia road. It

contains a police road post and a *sarai*, and a dâk bungalow is to be found on the opposite side of the Bāgh.

**Risewara.**—A village in the south of the Bhādra hills near the Bhandāra border. It contains a bazar which is attended by most of the dwellers in the Bhādra hill tract and the adjacent tracts in Bhandāra

**Rupjhar.**—A small village on the 23rd mile of the Bālā-ghāt-Baihar road, where it crosses the Nahāra river. Its area is 591 acres and population 260. There is a police outpost here. The village is owned by Ponwārs.

**Saletekri or Bijagarh Zamindari.**—This zamīndāri occupies the upper valleys of the Son and Banjar rivers. The portion of the zamīndāri that lies above the ghāts is known as Sāletekrī: it occupies the upper portion of the Banjar valley. It consists of a fairly open black soil plain, with various forest-clad, low, rocky ridges running down to the river. The lower tract, known as Bījāgarh, is separated from Sāletekrī by the rocky and forest-clad hills that shut in the valley of the Son and of its chief tributary the Tānda. Only the immediate neighbourhood of the Son river is cultivated, though the cultivation here is often valuable, tobacco and garden crops growing on the alluvial soil The forests have been ill used for many years. The teak of the lower Son valley only exists now in the inaccessible hills that fringe the Tānda, while the *sāl* is confined to a few patches in the Banjar valley. The tract grows mostly the lesser millets, broadcast rice, and a little gram and wheat. Its area is 182,484 acres, and it contains 66 villages. There are no villages of any size in the tract, nor any roads or schools, though schools are to be started at Belgāon and Sāletekrī. The zamindar is a Gond, related to the Bhānpur family.

**Samnapur (Railway Station).**—A village and railway station on the Sātpurā railway, north of Bālāghāt town in the Dhansuā pargana. Its area is 864 acres and its population 591. A made road runs from here to Lālbarrā, and a good deal of fuel and timber from the Dhansuā range is despatched

by rail to Nāgpur and Berār. There is a school here and there was till recently a police outpost. The village which contains several tanks and is well cultivated, is owned by Lodhīs.

**Samnapur.**—A village on the 28th mile of the Bālāghāt-Baihar road. There is a Public Works inspection bungalow here. The area of the village is 2296 acres and its population 163. It is owned by the Mau proprietors.

**Sawarjhori.**—A forest village at the source of the river of the same name, just north of the Bhondwā ghat. There are a cave and shrine here, much frequented at the Shivrātri by pilgrims from the vicinity.

**Sarekha Pargana.**—This tract is situated in the centre of the Baihar tahsil, and includes the lower Banjar valley, the tract round Baihar itself and the Rūpjhar plateau. The area is much cut up by hills and rivers, and is interspersed with forests. The soil is mostly yellow, and the chief crops are rice and the lesser millets It is traversed by the Baihar-Bālāghāt road The principal village is Baihar. It contains 103 villages; but, as it is no longer a definite area, its precise acreage cannot be stated.

**Selwa**—A large village just south of Katangī, area 1276 acres, population 871. It is owned by a Ponwār and contains a school. There is a manganese deposit here.

**Seoni (Sarad).**—A village some 3 miles south of Hattā in the zamīndāri of that name. Its area is 1126 acres, and its population 724 It contains fine black soil, and is celebrated for its large tank, which was repaired and enlarged in the famine of 1900.

**Son River**—The Son rises in the Bhānpur zamīrdāri; for some distance its course is northward and eastward, till, after cutting through a deep and narrow ravine in a ridge of rocks that bars its course near Bothnā, it runs south wards through the Bījāgarh zāmīndāri, meeting the Tandā river at Machurdā. Its course is through almost uninterrupted forest, and consists of a succession of rocky pools,

At Raudāpat it runs through a rocky gorge, abrupt and narrow, though of no great depth, taking two turns, first to the right and then to the left, in close succession. The deep pool so formed is full of huge fish and is considered to be sacred to a Gosain who once lived there. In the south of the zamındāri, valuable alluvial soil is deposited by the river, which carries rich crops of vegetables and tobacco. After traversing the Government forests which lie to the south of the zamīndāri, the river turns westward below the steep cliffs of Chauria and slowly makes its way through the black-soil plains of Lānji and Kirnāpur into the Bāgh at Murkurā. Numerous fields of sugarcane fringe its banks through this latter portion of its course. Gold washing is carried on in the upper reaches of the river. Its course in the District is 77 miles.

**Sonewani.**—A small village in the Baihar tahsīl, in the upper valley of the Uskal. It gives its name to the Sonewani ghāt, the old route by which the Bālāghāt-Baihar road ascended the Sātpurās

**Sonewani.**—A large but very thinly populated village in the Bālāghāt tahsil on the Seonī border, above the Sonewāni forest, to which this village gives its name.

**Sonpuri.**—A small village about one mile off the 27th mile of the Bālāghāt-Baihar road area 696 acres, population 191. It is the best village in the upper part of Bhānpur, and is now held in mālguzāri right by Ponwārs who purchased it from the zamindār It contains a school.

**Temni.**—A fine village on the Son river. north-west of Lanji. Its area is 2157 acres and its population 1,299 persons. It contains a school. The mālguzārs are Ponwārs.

**Tipagarh Hill.**—A range of hills running through the Baihar tahsil which divides the watershed of the Wainganga from that of the Nerbudda, and forms a small part of the backbone of India. It extends some 13 miles north-west from the Telan pass on the Balāghāt-Baihar road. The Baihar-Lāmta road also traverses the range near Bhurbuția Other

passes are the Bhānmatī pass and the Dhokri ghāt. The hills are usually flat-topped and the highest is 2761 feet above the sea The prevailing rocks are biotitic gneiss, schists and phyllites: the high level laterite lies above this: then comes the trap, and highest of all, a cap of low level laterite. The high level laterite shades into bauxite, the deposits of which are important Colonel Bloomfield, once Deputy Commissioner of this District, built a bungalow here, which has since disappeared. The range is clothed with a mixed forest of bamboos and other species of no special value.

**Topla.**—Toplā is the name of a small forest village and also of the forest surrounding it, which covers most of the eastern side of Raigarh. The forest is traversed by the Halon river, and contains valuable sāl timber, interspersed with high flat-topped hills, one of which, Naktībīdi, is 2914 feet in height. A forest bungalow exists at Sūpkhār.

**Wainganga River.**—This river, into which falls the entire drainage of the Bālāghāt and much of that of the Baihar tahsīl, reaches the District at a point some 4 miles north-west of Pādriganj station on the Bengal-Nāgpur Railway. For some distance it forms the boundary between this and the Seonī District. Its course here is interrupted by a succession of bars of rock, with small falls. From Phandīkua hill to just below Bālāghāt town, its course lies entirely within the District; its bed for most of this distance is sandy, though there is a considerable ridge of rock crossing the river near Bālāghāt. Down to its junction with the Bāgh river it divides the Bālāghāt and Bhandāra Districts, after which it leaves the Bālāghāt District altogether. Its chief tributaries are the Sāwarjhori and the Mahkāri, draining the Mau pargana; the Nahāra, draining the south of Baihar and the Dhansuā forests; the Ghisarī, running through Dhansuā, Lingā and part of Hattā, the Sarāthi from Karolā, and the Chunai from Katangī. The Bāgh joins it just at the spot where it leaves the District. Its breadth is from 600 to 1000 feet and its length, before it entirely leaves the District, 61 miles.

**Waraseoni.**—This trading village, which is second in population to the District headquarters and is the most important commercial centre in the District, is situated on the Chunai river, at the junction of the roads to Katangī, Lālbarrā, Rāmpailī, and Bālāghāt, from which latter town it lies 10 miles almost due west. Its population in 1901 was 3975, of whom 247 were literate. The figures of the preceding census were 3977. The area of the village is 1111 acres, of which 10·45 are *nazūl*. The mālguzār is a Ponwār, who pays Rs. 400 land revenue. The principal castes are Parwār Baniās, Koshtās, Mahārs, and Kasārs; the chief industries are weaving, dyeing and the making of brass utensils and bangles. There is a very important cattle bazar here, the transactions in live stock being estimated at 2 lakhs of rupees in value per annum. About a lakh and a half worth of, cloth, 3 lakhs worth of yarn, and half a lakh of brass and other metal work are also said to change hands. The market is held on Tuesday and there is besides a daily bazar or *guzri*. The District Council manages the bazar and takes the bazar dues and the cattle registration fees, from which it receives about Rs. 5,000 per annum. The local weavers and those of neighbouring villages dispose of their goods here to outside purchasers, who come from Jubbulpore and Mandla. The principal cloths made are *dhotīs*, *koras* and *sāris*, but not of the best quality *Kāsa pairīs* (anklets) are made by the Otkari caste, and utensils of *kasa*, brass and *bharat* by Kasārs. The place is said to have been founded some 150 years ago, by one Vilāyat Khān of Newārgaon, a local zamīndār, in order to form a bazar in his own zamīndāri. The place was at first considered a hamlet of Wāra and was thus called Wārāseonī. There is a Station-house, a dispensary, a vernacular middle school, a pound and a bazar office here, and a good *sarai* and a Public Works Department inspection hut. There are two tanks, of which the more important, the Shankar talao, called after Mr. Chitnavīs, late Deputy Commissioner, was built in the 1896-97 famine as a relief work, at a cost of Rs 4,000.

Were it to hold water, it would be of much use to the cattle of the weekly bazar. There is a small but handsome and richly carved Jain temple here belonging to the Parwār community. There was a municipality here from 1873 to 1902, in which year it was abolished, as the town was considered too insignificant to need such elaborate machinery for its administration. It is now proposed to constitute it a notified area.

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